Economic Development Committee

Inquiry into the road safety benefits of fixed speed cameras

Submission 41

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Minister for Police; Emergency Services; Road Safety
Leader of the House in the Legislative Assembly

Our Ref: 31-07855

Mr Evan Moorhead
Chair
Economic Development Committee
Inquiry into the Road Safety Benefits of Fixed Speed Cameras
Legislative Assembly of Queensland
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane QLD 4000

Dear Mr Moorhead,

I am pleased to have the opportunity to make a submission to the Inquiry into the Road Safety Benefits of Fixed Speed Cameras.

As you may know, the Road Safety Council of Western Australia recently commissioned research into options for best practice in speed enforcement. This research was undertaken by Professor Max Cameron of Monash University Accident Research Centre (MUARC) in 2006 and 2008. The reports can be found on the MUARC website and I recommend them to you.

1. ***What is the appropriate role for fixed speed cameras in enforcing speed limits in Queensland?***

The 2006 report, titled *Development of Strategies for Best Practice in Speed Enforcement in Western Australia*, considered among other things, the use of fixed and mobile speed cameras in Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway and the United Kingdom. The review found that fixed cameras were associated with:

- Reductions in the number of people killed or seriously injured at the camera sites beyond what might ordinarily be expected;
- Reductions in crashes resulting in minor injuries at camera sites;
- Reductions in average travel speeds; and
- Reductions in excessive speeding.

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Fixed speed cameras have been shown to have a substantial local effect on crashes, especially in regard to fatal and serious injury crashes. For this reason they are most suitable for use on highly-trafficked high-speed roads such as urban freeways, where other forms of speed enforcement such as mobile camera units at the roadside present a danger to the operators and the traffic itself.

The use of fixed speed cameras has been shown to be effective in reducing casualty crashes in known problem areas of high crash risk or where there is the risk of particularly severe crashes occurring, commonly referred to as black spot areas. Where the increased risk relates to a particular route or area the treatment can be spread across this black route or area. In general, black spot or black route programs are intended to have the greatest effect at the black spot site or along the black route and are generally not aimed at treating speed across the road network.

Fixed speed cameras should be one element of enforcement within a comprehensive speed enforcement strategy designed to reduce network wide and specific instances of speeding. Other modes of speed enforcement – such as point-to-point cameras, hand held laser speed detection devices and mobile speed cameras – have also been shown to effectively reduce casualty crashes.

2. ***Does prominent speed camera signage promote a safer speed environment?***

It is the intention of overt operations to be highly visible to road users and in doing so increase the perceived risk of detection, thus altering the behaviour of road users immediately in time and space. The effectiveness of overt speed enforcement may be due to the effect of specific deterrence, general deterrence or some combination of the two.

The overt or advertised use of fixed cameras has been shown to reduce serious casualties in the United Kingdom. Following its introduction in 1992, the UK speed camera program has expanded to an estimated 6,000 sites (ICF 2003), most of which are overt fixed camera installations. Results at each stage of the expansion indicate that the fixed cameras have achieved 5% to 42% reductions in casualty crashes and 47% to 65% reductions in serious casualties (fatalities and serious injuries) at camera sites.

3. ***How effective are the existing fixed speed cameras in decreasing crash risks and changing driver behaviour in Queensland?***

No comment.

4. ***What criteria should be used to select fixed speed camera sites?***

Western Australia is currently considering the criteria by which fixed speed camera sites should be selected. However, in the absence of a specific criteria, current thinking suggests that the most appropriate means of speed enforcement needs to be selected depending on the road environment and road type, crash history (frequency and severity), the nature and prevalence of speeding behaviour that is being addressed, whether a general or specific deterrent effect is sought and effectiveness of application of enforcement method.

5. ***Are fixed speed cameras more suited to specific road environments?***

As stated previously, fixed speed cameras are most suitable for use on highly-trafficked high-speed roads such as urban freeways, where other forms of speed enforcement such

as mobile camera units at the roadside present a danger to the operators and the traffic itself.

6. ***Will the roll out of new speed detection technology lead to excessive monitoring of Queensland drivers' speed?***

The use of speed detection technology merely allows the enforcement of existing speed limits; it does not impose new burdens.

7. ***Are there other technologies that would be more appropriate for reducing crash risk associated with excessive speed?***

The report on *Development of Strategies for Best Practice in Speed Enforcement in Western Australia* summarised the impact of different forms of speed enforcement technology in the following way.

Technology	Effect	Roads Best Suited To
Covert operation of mobile speed cameras	Reducing casualty crash frequency	Arterial roads in metropolitan areas and country towns and, to a lesser extent, in rural areas.
Covert operation of mobile speed cameras	Reducing crash severity	Metropolitan areas
Overt operation of mobile speed cameras	Reducing casualty crash frequency	Greatest effect closest to camera sites
Overt operation of fixed speed cameras	Reducing casualty crashes	Black spot areas
Mobile radar devices	Reducing casualty crashes	Rural areas on undivided roads in 100km/h zones (with inconclusive results for outer metropolitan areas)
Hand held laser speed detection devices	Reducing casualty crash frequency but not severity	Arterial roads in metropolitan areas
Point-to-point speed cameras	Reducing average speeds	Road lengths

This suggests that the goal of reducing speed-related crashes is best met through a mix of speed enforcement technologies and methods, depending on the road environment.

8. ***Are there other issues regarding the use of fixed speed cameras to reduce road-related risks in Queensland?***

As you are aware, increases in the number of speed cameras are often perceived by the public as a form of 'revenue raising', especially if the camera sites are not clearly marked and where the connection between speed and crash severity and frequency is unclear. As such, the public may be more easily reconciled to overt (or at least a mix of overt and covert), clearly marked, fixed cameras as the public may be less inclined to perceive that the Police are behaving sneakily in enforcing the laws.

Another approach that could serve to counter the perception of 'profiteering', as suggested by Cameron (2006), is to implement a transparent system whereby it is recognised that the costs of providing an effective system to reduce road trauma and social costs are met from the fines paid by speeding motorists. The surplus revenue may

also be the basis of Government investment in other effective road safety programs addressing problems other than speeding.

Conclusion

Once again, thank you for the opportunity to provide comments to your inquiry into the road safety benefits of fixed speed cameras.

Yours sincerely

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MINISTER FOR POLICE; EMERGENCY SERVICES; ROAD SAFETY

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