
From: Lincoln Phillip

Sent: Tuesday, 22 January 2008

To: Travel Safe Committee

Subject: RE: Your submission to the committee's inquiry into Automatic Number Plate Recognition technology

In 2005, in my capacity as Project Officer with another state's Police Department we had cause to consider developments in ANPR technology for law enforcement activities. This was initiated due to the dramatic reduction in the cost of the technology (From \$20,000 to about \$5000 per camera I recall) as well as an increase in its accuracy and error handling. Previous operations consisted of manual entry of individual number plates into an daily exported version a vehicles-of-interest database loaded onto a laptop inside a 2-person manned police vehicle. Using a car park drive through as an example, such an approach might yield one search per minute or say 1% of the car park, with approx 5% of the vehicles entered being flagged for further investigation. There were also obvious data entry errors to be considered in a moving vehicle.

With the addition of an ANPR camera, 100% of the carpark could be searched in half the time, by only one officer, yielding 100 times the number of vehicles of interest. The trial was so effective that it quickly brought into question the resourcing impact and capacity of existing systems to cope with such a dramatic increase in workload. This included the processing by traffic/uniform police, prosecution police, radio operators, Justice Department, etc with only limited off-set in savings. However, there would have been obvious increases in stolen motor vehicle recoveries and other intelligence gathering and other positive outcomes.

Complications of the timeliness of the data were also highlighted. Given the data was accurate only to the last download of the database, someone could have paid their registration after that time, but still appear in the laptop's database as if they hadn't. The temptation of course was to trust the computer's version of events rather than check back via radio. Mind you, this was 2005, there have bound to have been wireless database connectivity advancements since then.

I did not see the research through to its completion, however I would encourage you to contact the various State/Federal Police agencies to seek their feedback.

Regards,
Phillip Lincoln