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Please Quote: LB103310.1

Mr Jim Pearce  
Chair  
Travelsafe Committee  
Parliament House  
George Street  
**BRISBANE QLD 4000**

**RECEIVED****24 JAN 2008****TRAVELSAFE  
COMMITTEE**

Dear Mr Pearce

#### **AUTOMATIC NUMBER PLATE RECOGNITION TECHNOLOGY**

I refer to your letter dated 31 October 2007, addressed to the Minister for Roads and Ports, inviting a submission to the Travelsafe Committee's inquiry into Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) technology. Your letter has been referred to me for reply.

There are road safety advantages for the introduction of ANPR technology. These include the detection and enforcement of unlicensed drivers, as well as drivers using unregistered vehicles. Additionally, ANPR technology has the potential to identify the proportion of vehicles on the roads that are unregistered and potentially unsafe.

VicRoads is currently involved in a trial of ANPR technology in conjunction with Victoria Police. VicRoads is supplying a monthly dataset to Victoria Police consisting of expired, cancelled and suspended registrations and disqualified drivers where the registration plate is linked with the licence record. Should the trial show ANPR to be reliable and effective, more widespread applications, including enforcement, could be undertaken. However, at this stage, the trial is only being conducted as an exploratory exercise.

A number of challenges have currently been met in reaching this stage of the trial. The key issues being faced in the implementation of ANPR involve the accuracy and timeliness of the information provided to police, and the costs and resources required for the widespread application of ANPR technology.

There are limitations with the practical implementation of ANPR technology, in particular, the extraction and use of registration and licensing data that must be entered using the ANPR software.

As the software is created to be used exclusively with the camera technology, the software often has specific requirements on data fields, e.g. make, model, year, and colour. These requirements do not take into account limitations on the available data in the registration and licensing systems. For example, there may be missing or incomplete fields in the data provided, which may flag a vehicle that is legitimately registered. The operational aspects of enforcement must have provisions for a certain level of error in the identification of vehicles of interest.

Further to this, one of the challenges being faced is the identification of unregistered motorcycles and their riders. This is primarily due to the required positioning of the camera to record registration number plates. Presently, the cameras used in the trial in Victoria are positioned to capture the front registration plate of approaching vehicles. Motorcycles only have one registration plate and it is positioned on the rear of the vehicle, hence the current arrangement is not suitable for their identification. It may be possible to resolve this issue by changing the camera angles to read motorcycle registration plates from behind, however, further work is required to validate the accuracy of this process.

Delayed payment technology (such as Bpay and credit card payments) could mean that a vehicle identified using ANPR as unregistered might have been paid by the registered operator the day before, and is sitting in a payment queue waiting to be processed. Hence, issues of timely provision of data and associated limitations must be given careful consideration.

VicRoads sees considerable potential in the use of ANPR technology. The greatest road safety benefits would be in the removal of unregistered vehicles and unlicensed drivers from the road network. Both of these categories are overrepresented in crash statistics. There are a number of barriers to the successful implementation of ANPR technology to aid law enforcement; however, these barriers should not be seen as prohibitive.

Yours sincerely

**GARY LIDDLE**  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**21 / 1 /2008**