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ROADS MINISTER UNAWARE OF SPEED CAMERA WARNING SIGN TRAP

School zone lights campaigner Peter Olsen has claimed that the Minister for Roads, Michael Daley, is unaware of a major trap that exists with school zone speed cameras that would help explain why 600 drivers per day are losing their licences.

"All speed cameras have 3 warning signs on the approach to them. The signs are supposed to indicate what the speed limit at the camera is.

"The warning signs on the approach to normal speed cameras show the speed limit, but the signs on the approach to school zone speed cameras do not. They show the 40kmh limit that applies for 3 hours a day, but they do not show the normal speed limit that applies for the other 21 hours. The problem exists at every one of the new school zone speed cameras.

"It is a huge revenue raiser for the Government, which explains why the loophole has not been closed. King Georges Rd for example is 70kmh for almost its entire length, with the exception of the short stretch at Beverly Hills where the speed camera is located, where it drops to 60kmh. Drivers who miss the earlier 60kmh sign are not warned by the speed camera signs that the speed limit at the camera is 60kmh not 70kmh.

"In a radio interview with Alan Jones this morning the Roads Minister was asked about the situation. He denied that it exists and indicated that the signs show both speed limits. See <http://www.schoolzonelights.com.au/alanjonesdaley270209.mp3>

The Minister then went on to claim that he is concerned about the high number of drivers who are losing their licences. If the situation concerns the Minister he should acquaint himself with some of the unfair causes, such as this one.

"The Minister further stated: *"I have asked the RTA to put proposals to me for better marking of school zones, because many are not marked as well as they should be."*

"The Minister does not need to ask the RTA to propose solutions for better marking. The solution already exists, namely the installation of cost-effective flashing lights at all school zones. The RTA has already been given the technology to use for free.

"Making the static signage more obvious, as proposed by the Minister, is pointless as it does nothing to warn drivers when the time is 8.05am as opposed to 7.55am. As a result children's lives are put at risk, which the Minister regularly claims needs to be avoided.

"The Minister will be pleased to learn that private enterprise will shortly be assisting him, via the installation of 20 sets of flashing lights on private property in the Liverpool, Fairfield and Blacktown areas.

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Speed Cameras in School Zones Additional Information

All speed cameras have three warning signs on the approach to them. The signs are supposed to indicate what the speed limit is:



The ones in school zones show the 40kmh limit, which applies for 3 hours a day, but they do not show the normal speed limit that applies for the other 21 hours.



If one takes the Ernest St exit to the Spit Bridge for example, a major thoroughfare, the camera signs do not warn drivers that it is actually 50kmh there not 60. If one assumes it is 60kmh, one gets booked by the speed camera at Middle Harbour Public School. That is no doubt why it is one of the government's biggest money earners.

The same applies at King Georges Rd Beverly Hills. Most of King Georges Rd is 70kmh. The section through the Beverly Hills shopping centre is 60kmh but the speed camera signs do not indicate that. So if a driver happens to miss the earlier 60 sign they get booked.

The speed cameras at Beverly Hills break just about every other rule in the book:

- They are at the bottom of a long hill, which RTA guidelines say cameras are not supposed to be.
- They are cleverly hidden, whereas the previous Roads Minister stated that the most effective deterrent to speeding is highly visible cameras.

- They are half a km from the schools at either end of the shopping centre that they are supposed to be protecting.
- There are school zone flashing lights at the location but heading southbound there are 3 sets of traffic lights between the flashing lights and the speed camera. By the time drivers have spent 5 minutes stopped at the lights most have forgotten about the flashing lights.

Before the cameras were installed there were two separate school zones there. When the camera was installed it was made one long school zone. In fact Mr Roozendaal said quote: "It is an unusually long school zone".

That guarantees that it frustrates drivers, meaning as soon as they pass the camera they speed up. Many are doing 60kmh or 70kmh when they reach the schools half a km down the road. How does that protect school children?

There are two cameras there. Why are they not located one at each school, if child safety rather than revenue is their main purpose?

Government Figures

The Government regularly quotes how many drivers get booked by school zone speed cameras and uses that as an excuse for installing more of them.

Firstly they do not distinguish between drivers booked in the 3 hours per day that they are school zones and the 21 hours a day that they are not.

Secondly one reason so many drivers get booked during non-school hours is because of the missing speed limit indication on the approach signs.

Lack of Concentration

There are two major risks to children in school zones. One is speeding, the other is the failure to keep a watch out for children.

Ask any driver what they concentrate on when they drive past a speed camera and they will tell you it isn't the road ahead.

Their eyes are glued to the speedometer, especially when on a hill like at Beverly Hills. They have just slowed down from 70kmh, so 40 feels like 20. It is impossible to stick to 40 without watching the speedo.

A car doing 40kmh with the driver concentrating on the speedo is as much a danger to children as a car doing 45kmh and the driver watching out for children. The government will not admit to that because of the revenue the speed cameras rake in.

Statistics

The government claims a large percentage of crashes are caused by speeding, purely because the drivers were exceeding the speed limit at the time. That is used as an excuse to raise revenue via speeding fines.

A similar percentage of drivers were wearing tight jeans at the time of the accidents. Does that mean that wearing tight jeans causes accidents?

Existence of School Zones

The Roads Minister stated on 11 December last year that he did not think that there should be flashing lights at all school zones because drivers might become desensitised.

Drivers do not become desensitised to traffic lights, nor would they become desensitised to school zone flashing lights.

What does desensitise drivers is the existence of numerous 40kmh zones that should not be there at all. It also frustrates them and makes them more dangerous drivers.

Take Elizabeth Drive at Bonnyrigg High School for example. There is a pedestrian bridge over the top and there is a fence down the median strip almost the entire length of the school zone, meaning it is impossible to cross the road. Why is it a 40kmh zone at all?

Same situation at Princes Hwy Kogarah. Same on King Georges Rd Wiley Park.

It cannot be claimed that all roads with schools on them must have 40kmh school zones. St Joseph's Primary School at Moorebank adjoins Newbridge Rd but there is no school zone on Newbridge Rd. There is no direct access from the school to Newbridge Rd but the main gate is only a short distance up the side street, Nuwarra Rd.

By comparison in other places there are school zones on roads where the school does not even adjoin the road, just because there are children about, so why not at Moorebank?

For example there is a school zone on Narellan Rd at Narellan even though the school is 900m from the road on a side street. See:

<http://camden.yourguide.com.au/news/local/news/general/rethink-urged-on-narellan-road-school-zone/1442689.aspx>

The only consistency in it all is the revenue raising. It has little to do with the safety of children.