

TRANSCRIPT

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ECONOMY AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

Inquiry into the impact of road safety behaviours on vulnerable road users

Melbourne—Wednesday 13 December 2023

(via videoconference)

MEMBERS

Alison Marchant—Chair

Kim O’Keeffe—Deputy Chair

Anthony Cianflone

Wayne Farnham

John Mullahy

Dylan Wight

Jess Wilson

WITNESS

Neville Taylor, Road Safety Camera Commissioner.

The CHAIR: I would just like to start by acknowledging the Traditional Owners on the various lands on which we are gathered today. I acknowledge that in this virtual environment we are gathered on many different lands, and I pay my respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

Welcome to the public hearing for the Legislative Assembly Economy and Infrastructure Committee Inquiry into the impact of road safety behaviours on vulnerable road users. All mobile telephones should now be turned to silent.

All evidence given today is being recorded by Hansard, and while all evidence taken by the Committee is protected by parliamentary privilege, comments repeated outside of this hearing, including on social media, may not be protected by this privilege. Witnesses will be provided with a proof version of the transcript to check, and verified transcripts and other documents provided to the Committee during the hearing will be published on the Committee's website. Can I just remind Members and witnesses to mute their microphones when not speaking just to minimise any interference.

Commissioner, just for the interests of time and efficiency I thought I might introduce Committee Members to you as well. We have John Mullahy, who is the Member for Glen Waverley and is Acting Deputy Chair today. We have Committee Member Wayne Farnham, Member for Narracan; Jess Wilson, Member for Kew; and Anthony Cianflone, Member for Pascoe Vale. I am Alison Marchant, Chair, Member for Bellarine.

I thought, Commissioner, we might start with you and give you some time, 10 to 15 minutes, to make an opening statement or any remarks if you would like to talk to your submission, and then I will call upon Members too to maybe ask you further questions and dive a little bit deeper into your submission.

Neville TAYLOR: Okay. Thank you, Chair, for the welcome, and to the Members of your Committee. I give you a collective welcome wave back. Thank you for that. I have prepared, which I hope is sort of within the 10 to 15 minutes, a presentation today.

Visual presentation.

Neville TAYLOR: As you said, Neville Taylor is my name. I am the Road Safety Camera Commissioner in Victoria. I was appointed this role in June last year, and I am the fourth Commissioner since this role was established in 2012 under the *Road Safety Camera Commissioner Act 2011*. I would just like to acknowledge the Committee and the opportunity to make what I am aware is a late submission in relation to some of the work from my role as the Commissioner. As you said, I have tabled a written submission for the interest of the Committee, but today I just intend to talk to some of the key points within that, and then I can take questions that you may have from that.

Could we have the next slide, please? So just some background and context as to why we are here: the Commissioner is an independent statutory oversight body that was established to enhance community confidence in the operational accuracy and reliability of road safety cameras in Victoria. In that role I am supported by the Office of Road Safety Camera Commissioner, comprising a specialist technical adviser and other program managers, as well as a specialist reference group appointed under the Act, and that is a collective of experts and advisers from road safety research, academia, engineering, enforcement and policy as well as expertise around the sociology of behavioural change and the generals and specifics in deterrence theories.

In that, my role is to ensure that there is ongoing integrity, transparency and community confidence in Victoria's road safety camera system. The office I have provides the public with an alternative avenue for quality assurance, information and complaints about the road safety camera system. Under the powers of the Act, as the Commissioner I monitor and review the operation of the system and I investigate complaints, and I ultimately advise and make recommendations to the relevant minister, being the Minister for Police, on any matter in relation to the system.

I can tell you that since establishment in 2012 over the four commissioners there have been 26 formal investigations and reviews and 111 formal recommendations made. Mainly these recommendations centred around addressing systemic issues that have been identified, improving the systems and processes that govern the collaboration between the Road Safety Partners and other parties involved and also the management and operation of the road safety camera system. Since taking over the role last year I have conducted one formal

investigation and tabled two annual reports to the Parliament of Victoria. In that I have made eight formal recommendations, of which six have already been acquitted by the Road Safety Partners. But I can tell you there is community interest in the role of the Commissioner as well as the road safety camera system. One snapshot is that in the last financial reporting year there were just over 8,000 visitors to the Commissioner's website, 75% of those from within Victoria.

I felt that within the remit of my work, in looking at the terms of reference of this Inquiry, what would be relevant are the surveys of public perceptions of the road safety cameras. As well as that, I also considered that one of the five areas of focus that I have published, that I will focus on as I undertake my work under the Act, was also relevant, and that is, namely, the area of road users and speed—that is, community acceptance of road safety cameras depends on the effectiveness of other road safety initiatives and the road network. If the public had more faith in Victoria's road network—that is, reliable designs that are clear and intuitive in relation to the surrounding driving environment—then it may be more likely to trust road safety measures such as road safety cameras. I draw this out as an area that I base on my conclusions from previous Commissioners' inquiries, previous surveys and also academic research into road safety and advice from my reference group.

The next slide, please. I have just overseen the completion of the third wave of the road safety camera perceptions survey. This is yet to be published, but I do anticipate publishing it on the website by the end of this month. This third survey builds on two previous surveys conducted by my predecessors in 2017 and 2020. The primary objective is to measure the level of awareness of the role and the impact of the cameras; measure the views of the road safety camera system and the initiatives; measure the views on the impact of post COVID-19 on driving behaviour; and also identify any improvements that could enhance the public's views on the road safety camera system.

You will see from my written submission and from the embargoed report that I have provided the Committee that the methodology involved online interviews with a little over 1,200 adult respondents. There was a diversity in those respondents in terms of ethnicity, gender, age, demographics; work status, including professional and non-professional road users; and also place of residence, including metropolitan and regional. This was consistent with the first two waves of the survey, and at least 75% of the questions have remained each time to be able to form the basis of a potential longitudinal study to be done on this data that we now have.

Next slide, please. The survey report describes—you will see at the front—11 key findings. I just want to emphasise that these key findings from the wave 3 survey are not designed to provide in-depth analysis, as there is more detail on this provided in the full body of the report. Rather, the intention here is to provide quick call-outs on particular topics of interest. My submission I provided to the Committee is limited to calling out a range of those in a number of areas of interest that I felt would relate to the terms of reference of your Inquiry. In doing this there needs to be some caution in coming to final conclusions on these findings. They are more indicative of what respondents have provided and what they are telling us, and very importantly, they probably provide an opportunity for deeper analysis by road safety researchers. Having said that, we are confident that what the survey shows is that the public's perception generally towards road safety cameras enforcing speed has not changed significantly over the previous six years.

Next slide, please. I will just go through and draw your attention to a few of the themes in those findings. The first one relates to the relationship between infringements and collisions. Now, this is raw data, but it is indicative of the correlation between road users' high-risk behaviour and collision involvement. Generally, the statement is that the fewer infringements a person has had, the less likely they are to have had a collision. Now, I have to remind you that this is a set of data that is yet to have a deeper qualitative analysis to provide a real evidence base on that statement, and I am advised by my reference group that there are still questions around the variance of the respondents to the survey questions that led to this finding. However, the compelling thing in this, just based on this raw data, is the in-principle finding that has been consistent over the six years of the three waves of the survey. I just highlight this, not only for that in-principle finding of the relationship between high-risk behaviour and the likelihood of collision involvement, but also of the potential for this data to now be available for further road safety research to understand more about that relationship. But of course, this will not be work that will be undertaken and completed in time for this Committee's Inquiry and report by 31 March next year.

Next slide, please. The next area I will call out to you is the impact of speeding infringements on road users' behaviour. In this survey just under half of those surveyed during this wave admitted to having been fined for

speeding—that was 48%—which is consistent with the first two surveys. More than half of those respondents—55%—who received a previous infringement notice stated that they did now slow down all or most of the time and that they are what they consider to be a more careful driver now. This does continue a positive trend since the first survey in 2017, when that was at around about 48%, to now being about 55%. Another insight there was 34% of those who had received a prior speeding infringement notice admitted that their driving or riding behaviour had not changed.

I would also like to draw your attention to the area of the impact of road safety cameras on speeding road users. 75% of respondents admitted to speeding at least some of the time, and with over 41% of those saying that it is intentional, more so by younger drivers in the 18-to-29-year age group and even more so in the younger male drivers—and more so again for those who drive more frequently, such as on a daily basis, compared to those who drive a lot less frequently. Two-thirds of respondents admitted to slowing down when approaching a known road safety camera site. Now, this is a practice generally known and referred to as camera surfing.

I also want to just draw your attention to the area of environmental cues, speed limits and signage. From the survey there seems to be a high awareness of speed limits on Victorian roads, with 79% of respondents indicating their awareness of speed limits, particularly around school zones, residential streets and regional freeways, but not so much around roads bordering retail strips with outdoor dining, or aged care facilities or office-lined highways outside of the Melbourne CBD area. It is interesting that the awareness of speed limits the respondents demonstrated does appear to be reliant on the speed limit signs in those different scenarios. With that, less than half the respondents, 47%, agreed that speed limit signage was displayed consistently across the state of Victoria, and even less, 42%, agreed it was easy to predict the speed limit just based on the road and the surroundings. That was even less so for those respondents who are in the professional road user cohort.

I included information also in my written submission that I think is relevant to that particular insight from the survey. They were the conclusions that I came to in a formal investigation that I did last year into complaints that we received about fixed road safety cameras at the intersection of Davey Street and the Nepean Highway in Frankston. One significant matter that I identified in that investigation provided evidence of the existence of an inherent behaviour of road users relating to speed. I refer to this in my report that was published as factors influencing road users' choice of speed when driving. My finding in that matter showed that at times road users will elect to drive at a speed that is influenced by factors other than the posted speed limit sign. I found that this driving or riding behaviour by road users was very prevalent just last year in 2022, post the COVID-19 lockdown period, and this was when driving on a multilane arterial road. Having passed what the drivers considered to be the hazard, in this case outdoor roadside dining infrastructure, we found that road users often chose to increase their speed after they had passed the hazard but before they had got to the end of the reduced speed limit zone, which meant they were still well within a high vulnerable pedestrian activity area.

Next slide, please. Another area I want to call out—and I just show this slide, which is in the submission and the report—relates to what respondents told us about their observations of driving behaviour post the COVID-19 lockdowns. Now, this is, I think, particularly relevant to the Committee's Inquiry's terms of reference. Half of the respondents representing Victorians, 51%, believe that there were more dangerous driving behaviours that they saw on the roads post the COVID-19 lockdown period. I draw your attention to some of those responses, highlighting a view by the respondents of significant increases in distracted driving to 73%, speeding in different metro and regional settings between 62 and 69%, and disobeying traffic control lights, 54%. I highlight these as they are all high-risk behaviours that are subject to road safety camera enforcement.

I also just draw the connection here too and relate it to the submission from Victoria Police Assistant Commissioner Glenn Weir. I sat in when he presented to this Committee on 8 August this year, and I recognise that he spoke about similar observations by their officers in their traditional roadside enforcement activities since the lifting of the COVID-19 restrictions.

If I could have the next slide, please. This is my final piece to call out relating to the integrity of the road safety camera system. Whilst the majority of the respondents, 55%, said that they modify their behaviour after receiving a speeding infringement, only a third said they perceive the cameras to be fair. The wave 3 survey revealed that only one in three respondents perceived enforcement of speed was fair, and only slightly more perceived they were accurate—37%. What that gives us as a snapshot is six years of survey responses that have consistently revealed that the majority of Victorians believe that road safety cameras are just revenue raisers.

That started at 69% in 2017. There seemed to be some improvement in 2020, to 53%, but respondents came back at about 65% in this survey that had held that view.

If I can just go to the final slide, please. In terms of what that gives us and where we can go with this, the integrity of enforcement programs we know is influenced by the public perception and the credibility of these programs based on their accuracy, their fairness and their reasonableness. The available research from road safety experts is persuasive on the effectiveness of road safety cameras to reduce road trauma, and I particularly draw out here in Victoria the more recent and compelling research by MUARC, which finds that there has been a 47% reduction in casualty crashes at intersections on the enforcement leg of the camera system and even a 26% reduction of those casualty crashes when you consider all the approaches, which includes the non-enforcement legs that are taken into account. However, the public perception surveys by the Commissioners would indicate that that level of persuasiveness is perhaps still not shared by the community. This wave 3 survey provides I think invaluable feedback where there could be pathways identified to continue to bridge this gap. This rich set of data I now offer to the Road Safety Partners and the road safety research community. It is available and it can be used for further exploration to understand more about that. I have indicated in my work with the Road Safety Partners a commitment to working with them going into the new calendar year on what that potential is. I can tell you that my reference group of expert advisers have an enormous appetite for that work to be done.

So, Chair, I thank you and the Committee for receiving my written submission. I know it was late with your schedule due to the timing of the survey being done, but I trust that it will provide some useful insight for the terms of reference of your Inquiry. Thank you for my appearance today, and I am happy to take any questions that you may have.

The CHAIR: Thank you so much, Commissioner. It was a really comprehensive submission and it is actually very helpful for this Committee, so we appreciate it. We knew that the survey timeline was tight for you, so that is understandable. We will go to some questions, if we can do that, please, Commissioner. I will go to John Mullahy first.

John MULLAHY: Thanks, Chair. And thank you, Commissioner, for your submission and also the presentation here this morning. Just at the end of it you were talking about the public perception basis of the wave 3 survey, and consistently each of those three surveys has had high respondents believing that the road safety camera infrastructure is there predominantly for revenue raising. With 1,223 respondents in this one, 795 of them thought it was for revenue-raising. So I am just wanting to ask: how is your office working with the Victorian Government to increase public understanding of the safety benefits of the road safety cameras?

Neville TAYLOR: Thank you, John, for your interest in that. It is a very relevant question. Previous Commissioners have considered this and written to this in their annual reports to Parliament and have made several previous recommendations to the Road Safety Partners but also have given advice to the minister on how the Commissioner in this role would seek to improve that engagement, recognising the ethos set by the inaugural Commissioner the Honourable Gordon Lewis in that this role is the representative of the community, and work with the Road Safety Partners in this—so how can this role be more accessible—and communicating to the community on that? How I have approached this in my work: I have set up, with a very collaborative mindset, connections at a number of layers. Whilst I formally advise under the Act through the responsible Minister for Police, currently the Honourable Anthony Carbines, I also now have the connections and meet with the other relevant ministers, the Honourable Melissa Horne, Jaclyn Symes and Danny Pearson, and with road safety transport and fines. I meet at that level to keep promoting the purpose of the commissionership, but also so I can then keep understanding and ensuring that there is a strong awareness of the community's perception here at that level.

I similarly have regular programs now where I meet with the executives of all the relevant Road Safety Partners, along with the contractors and vendors involved with the program. Outside of that, one of the Commissioner's recommendations previously had been about how department of justice, as the authority responsible for managing the program, really builds the strategy around how the community can have greater access to information, not only about the operation of the camera system but also about the road safety benefits of the camera system. The key part in that strategy is the Cameras Save Lives website; it is the main portal for community to access that. So that is something that I focus very strongly on in terms of how they continue to make improvements, and I meet fairly regularly with the Department of Justice and Community Safety around

their current work on more and more opportunities to give community more information about that. That was demonstrated more recently over the first six months of this year as new technology on distracted driving enforcement came into play in Victoria. Along with that is my own website, which I continue to develop as a way of providing more information to community, but also as a way of promoting and encouraging the role of this office as an alternative avenue of inquiry for community for their questions about the road safety cameras.

The final bit is how I make myself available and present to speak publicly about not just my role but about the road safety cameras. You will have read about my background and what I feel is the value-add I bring to this role. Part of that is from my professional experience, not only in Victoria but around the world, in road policing and enforcement as really an advocate of the benefits of road safety cameras. I appear in the media and on radio when the time is right. An example of that is an engagement through the Victorian Transport Association to try to connect more with the heavy vehicle industry, and I will be a speaker at their upcoming annual conference in early 2024 where I hope to continue promoting the opportunities for that cohort to understand more about the road safety camera system and the behaviours and the benefits that has.

John MULLAHY: Thank you, Commissioner.

The CHAIR: Thank you. Wayne, I will come to you next.

Wayne FARNHAM: Thank you, Chair, and thank you, Commissioner for your very, very detailed report. I have a couple of questions. One is around the recommendations. I think you stated there have been 111 recommendations to government. How do you monitor the implementation of those recommendations? I think you said you have made eight recommendations to government—if I am wrong, I apologise—and six have been acquitted. Why hasn't the Victorian Government taken those up? So that is that question. My second question is: we are on track to have the highest road toll we have had since 2008, so where are we failing?

Neville TAYLOR: Thank you, Wayne. Thank you for those two. I will address your first one, because I have probably got more specific information on that, and of course your second question is the very complex one. The recommendations, if I take you back a little bit to material that is publicly available—my immediate predecessor, Commissioner Leane, early in his term of Commissionership focused a lot on the status that he felt he inherited around the recommendations, but also a plethora of outstanding recommendations. He ran a project which was a reconciliation of all the outstanding recommendations since the Commissioner's role commenced, and that was a piece of work that he published in the 2019–20 Commissioner's report to Parliament. That was the first step to getting a good sense of exactly where we are at with all these recommendations that had been made to date and what has been achieved out of that. When I came into the Commissionership in June last year what I found was that the reconciliation now provided a much better oversight of what had been achieved but more so what was outstanding. I can tell you quite confidently that the department of justice along with the other Road Safety Partners have worked very cooperatively with me in developing a formal governance plan and tracking register to give us a much more reliable and consistent approach—that end-to-end approach, from the Commissioner making recommendations, to how they are progressed, received, considered and delivered on, and then how they are actually closed out and acquitted by both the authorities but also on my advice to the minister. You can read more about that in the annual report that was recently tabled to Parliament on the 2022–23 year.

I highlighted that as I think it is a significant improvement in the governance of managing the road safety camera program. I am very confident that is the first time now that we have had perhaps what I say is a mature, reliable, systematic approach to managing the recommendations, and I am also confident that over the next 12 months we will see significant progress on acquitting recommendations. I have just received through the department deputy secretary a report to close out another 13 of those recommendations. Many of those relate to a significant Inquiry done some years ago in relation to the WannaCry virus investigation that was a real risk around the security of the road safety camera system. I hope that demonstrates to you where we now sit and what I think the future is with the more reliable governance over those recommendations. Of the eight that I have made, six came out of my investigation into the Nepean Highway matter and I have accepted the actions that the Road Safety Partners have taken. They have met the intent of six of those recommendations, so they have been formally closed and delivered on. The other two I recognise were recommendations that really were about building stronger collaboration between the Road Safety Partners but also engaging local governments around Victoria more specifically in the road safety camera program.

In relation to your second question, you are right in terms of where Victoria sits and indeed across Australia. This is an area where I find myself often having to tread very carefully in my role. I come from a policing background, as you would know, and more recently in my policing career around road safety leadership and particularly enforcement, and I have a very broad base of expertise around that. At the moment I am working under a particular Act with a very specific remit, and I am often reminded by people about what that remit is. But I think what I can say to you—and I probably echo the thoughts of other witnesses that have presented to you, and I base this on the advice of my reference group but also the research—is about speed, and I have talked about one of my areas of focus around road users who speed and the factors that influence people to speed but also individuals—all of us. What do we understand about the relationship between our speed and road trauma? And this survey calls out things like that around people's perceptions of whether they see low-level excess speeding as dangerous or not. The fact is that the research and the data show that at least a third of serious road trauma on our roads is attributed to not always high excess speed but inappropriate speed, and that for me is a bit of a no-brainer around what is in the strategy as appropriate. There needs to be a complete rethink around speeds and safer speeds on our roads.

Wayne FARNHAM: Thank you.

The CHAIR: Thank you. Anthony.

Anthony CIANFLONE: Thank you, Commissioner, and thanks again for your good work, your submission and the research report which I went through last night—very comprehensive and very informative, so thank you. Once that is publicised it will be very helpful for my community in many ways. My question just goes back to I guess the heart of what the Inquiry is about and what a lot of your report reflects on, which is around your views on road user behaviour post COVID-19. Looking at your research, we have heard a lot of anecdotal evidence that driver behaviour has worsened since the pandemic, including increased speeding, distractions through mobile phones and other rules being broken while people are driving. So my question is: with your current hat on and your current role and your previous experience, what is your view around the post-COVID-19 behavioural trends, and how is that coming through in your research and your work? What are the main factors driving that behaviour, and what can we do with road safety cameras to help improve that going forward?

Neville TAYLOR: Thank you, Anthony. The surveys, I guess, when I draw to that and as I highlighted in my presentation to you, I felt it was an interesting connection with what respondents said about what they were seeing on the roads in terms of an increase in the high-risk behaviour post the COVID-19 lockdowns and as people were coming back onto the roads. I felt that was an interesting consistency with what Assistant Commissioner Glenn Weir had presented I think on their enforcement data but also anecdotally through their enforcement officers and what they are seeing on the road. Clearly there are some indicators that that is a fact.

What I would also draw your attention to in terms of my work now in the road safety camera system is one of the areas I focus on is the infringement data that is released through road safety cameras, and more recently the department released the infringement data for not just the fourth quarter of the last financial year but also for the 2022–23 financial year. In that, in terms of the enforcement by road safety cameras, that showed that there actually has been a decrease in a number of the categories of enforceable behaviour over that period. In the last quarter of last year there was a 7% decrease in all camera-detected/related offences. So when you look at some of that data, that says there are less people being enforced, but then there is a broader picture around that in terms of then a deeper dive. We know cameras are deactivated at times because of the maintenance, the certification and the verification schedules, or for other reasons there will be times when Victoria Police will make decisions not to issue infringements, on the basis of a circumstance. I know Victoria Police have a really strong focus on ensuring, when infringements are issued to road users, that they are fair to the road user, otherwise they are reluctant to issue infringements, and that is a key focus of mine.

The other bit is in that infringement data what seems to stay consistent is, while we often talk about the people doing the wrong thing and the infringements, an area I continue to focus on is the positive bit. There is consistency that there are 99-plus per cent of road users going through fixed-camera sites in particular and a slightly lower percentage through the mobile camera sites who are complying with the safe road use rules, like speed or red lights. I have focused very much on the new distracted driving and seatbelt cameras and the enforcement that started on 1 July, and I know that Victoria Police and the other Road Safety Partners are quite alarmed at what those first few months of data are showing them around the behaviour that has been detected

by those handfuls of trailers that have been placed around the road network. In particular, I think, the surprising insight is the number of people who have been seen to be either not wearing a seatbelt or inappropriately wearing a seatbelt, that is, either wearing it, for some reason, in a way that is not going to allow the seatbelt to do its job, or—and I know police, as they do this, recognise—in a way that is quite deliberately inappropriately worn. So that has been a real insight for the Road Safety Partners just in the first three months of that technology.

For me, my focus in my work around that is in ensuring that that technology continues to operate accurately and reliably. So I have had the opportunity to sit with all the people that work in that process, from when a detection is done to, you know, the independent human verifiers to identify, taking it from an artificial intelligence detection through to certainty by Victoria Police that there is an offence there. I am very comfortable, having had that opportunity to see how those people do that work, that it is reliable and that the people who are getting those infringement notices are the people who have earned them, who deserve them—because why you would drive past one of those trailers on your mobile phone or not wearing a seatbelt is beyond me. But similarly, in my role I can tell you that I have not yet had really any complaints or inquiries at my office from people about that new technology.

The CHAIR: Interesting. Thank you.

Anthony CIANFLONE: Thanks.

The CHAIR: Jess, I will go to you.

Jess WILSON: Thanks, very much, Chair. And thank you very much, Commissioner, for your very comprehensive statement today and answers to questions. One question that I think maybe has not been touched upon is: what sort of impact does the, I suppose, use of maps and navigational guidance on phones, where they describe where speed cameras are now, have on people avoiding speed cameras; and do you find it has the consequence, through your data, where people tend to slow down as they go through an intersection or go under a bridge on a freeway and then speed up a few hundred metres after the camera? Is that something that your data shows? And I suppose even more so now there is an ability for people to identify speed cameras that are on the move and put them on maps so that people get alerts about them. Is that resulting in a lack or a decrease in the number of fines that are being issued?

Neville TAYLOR: Thanks, Jess. Look, you are quite right, and just the survey alone does call that out, and it talks about what respondents say—that self-reporting around their behaviour in what is colloquially known as camera surfing. It is recognised that there is the opportunity through various forms of technology, and people do use that. We know that through the survey but also through researchers' publications around how road users—and there is a differentiation between normal road users and professional road users—will proactively work that to identify where there is road safety camera enforcement. I guess for my focus on that and my view on that I go back to the available research, and in Victoria MUARC is primarily a leading avenue for that, but there is other research, global research, that is consistent with this: that, notwithstanding that, there is still evidence that the presence of road safety cameras and the enforcement experience people have does have an impact on reducing the incidence of collisions involving trauma either at intersections or in the kind of haloed proximity of that area, and that is an evidence base that adds to the benefits of road safety cameras as one part of a suite of the road safety sort of enforcement program. The MUARC research is pretty compelling, and I am influenced by that. That sort of hybrid, of the fixed road camera systems along with the mobile road safety camera systems, is the best model to be able to achieve the balance between the general deterrence theory for behaviour change and a specific deterrence theory for behaviour change of particular high-risk drivers.

Some recommendations have previously been made that there should be greater transparency for people around the road safety camera system, and that includes information around where camera enforcement is located. So notwithstanding what is available on technology, the Cameras Save Lives website has within it for all of us to access all the locations of all the fixed road safety cameras, all the highway intersection cameras and all the highway fixed cameras, as well as the point-to-point camera locations on the Hume Freeway and the Peninsula Link in Victoria. What I ensured or monitored as the new technology was rolled out with the distracted driving trailers is that they maintained that same level of transparency for the community. Anyone can go onto that website now and just see the areas where mobile road safety camera cars have been approved to operate on all the approved sites around Victoria, as well as where the new distracted driving and seatbelt trailers will be

operating. Now, they will not give people a specific ‘this spot on this day’, but it helps people be aware and understand that there is camera enforcement in this area. There is evidence that an outcome of that is that people who might have a propensity to speed will adjust their behaviour accordingly, and that is effectively the outcome. What I am comfortable with is that none of the program is actually designed to be a covert camera enforcement program. It is all quite highly visible, and as I have said, in terms of transparency there is information made available to people.

What is an interesting one, Jess, in that, and I saw this come through in the Nepean Highway investigation I did, is that people highlight it with their in-car technology—you know how you get an audio warning, if you have it set up, telling you what the speed limit is and a friendly reminder that you might have just gone over the speed limit. As there are speed limit reductions in progress around the State of Victoria now as part of the strategy, people will be getting perhaps those audio reminders through their in-car technology that are inconsistent now with what the speed limit is. That was something identified in the Frankston investigation, when the speed limit was reduced from 60 kilometres an hour to 40 kilometres an hour with that. For me, my focus there and on any speed limit reduction project in the State of Victoria is really on ensuring that all road users are given every opportunity to adjust their driving behaviour before they are confronted with enforcement and start receiving infringements. We found in the Frankston Inquiry, and there has been in previous inquiries, that that has not always been the case. That is part of what led to my recommendation—that there were a significant number of people who I was comfortable were exceeding the then speed limit, but they should have that offending behaviour excused because they just were not given the right level of opportunity to change their behaviour, because of the unusual circumstances. I think they need that if we want people to have full confidence and trust in the benefits of the road safety cameras.

The CHAIR: Thank you very much. Commissioner, I am mindful of time, and we will have to wrap up our session there today. So thank you, once again, for the submission and taking our questions today. It is really comprehensive information for our Committee to consider. We thank you so much for your time today.

Neville TAYLOR: Okay, thank you. And I will advise your secretariat the moment that report is published on the website so that it can then be loaded into Hansard as well.

The CHAIR: Perfect. Thank you so much, Commissioner.

Neville TAYLOR: Okay, thank you. Thank you, Committee.

Committee adjourned.