



Road Safety
Camera
Commissioner

REPORT OF THE ROAD SAFETY CAMERA COMMISSIONER

Hume Freeway (Amaroo Road, Craigieburn) – Fixed digital road safety camera information

Release date: 15 December 2017



PURPOSE

- 1 The purpose of this document is to inform the public in relation to the fixed digital road safety camera system on Hume Freeway, and in particular at Amaroo Road.

BACKGROUND

- 2 **Speed** is the major factor in both involvement and in severity of collisions. Not only is **control** reduced and **reaction time** shortened but speed results in more severe **outcomes**.
- 3 The Towards Zero road safety strategy and action plan is about saving as many lives and reducing as many serious injuries as possible. It involves collaborative efforts from groups such as Victoria Police, VicRoads, Transport Accident Commission, and the Department of Justice and Regulation.
- 4 Prior to being appointed Road Safety Camera Commissioner I had 35 years' experience of dealing with the outcomes of serious road trauma and death.
- 5 A FaceBook Group has apparently formed, and sought media publicity, in relation to what they assert is a group of unjustified speeding infringements as detected by the fixed road safety system on Hume Freeway. There have been items in local press in relation to these issues. One person identifying herself as Cathy was interviewed on 3AW by Mr Neil Mitchell on 28 November 2017. She asserted there were 255 Facebook group members, and she said **all of them** had written to the office of the Road Safety Camera Commissioner. She said **all** were of the view that they had been wrongly alleged to have been travelling at **108km/h**.
- 6 That as at 12 December 2017 the office of the Road Safety Camera Commissioner has received communications in relation to 12 alleged infringing drivers, a number substantially less than 255. Many of the alleged infringing drivers have multiple infringements.
- 7 The Office of the Road Safety Camera Commissioner Annual Report 2016-17 reported on the Public Perceptions Survey conducted by EY Sweeney at our request. We noted that low-level speeders are disengaged from the notion that their behaviour can have consequences.

THE FIXED DIGITAL ROAD SAFETY CAMERA SYSTEM

- 8 The Hume Freeway cameras monitor speed at each location. There are 10 instantaneous camera sites, 5 in each direction.
- 9 The instantaneous camera locations are as follows:
 - a. O'Herns Road, Epping (north and southbound) – speed limit 100km/h
 - b. Amaroo Road, Craigieburn (north and southbound) - speed limit 100km/h
 - c. Mount Fraser, Beveridge (north and southbound) – speed limit 110km/h
 - d. Adjacent to Station Street, Wallan (north and southbound) – speed limit 110km/h
 - e. Broadford-Flowerdale Road, Broadford (north and southbound) – speed limit 110km/h
- 10 The cameras can also monitor point-to-point (also known as average speed) between camera sites. There are 6 point-to-point zones in use are:
 - a. Northbound:
 - i. From O'Herns Rd, Epping to Amaroo Rd, Craigieburn – 100km/h
 - ii. From Mt Fraser, Beveridge to Station St, Wallan – 110km/h

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- iii. From Station St, Wallan to Broadford-Flowerdale Rd, Broadford – 110km/h
- b. Southbound:
 - i. From Broadford-Flowerdale Rd, Broadford to Station St, Wallan – 110km/h
 - ii. From Station St, Wallan to Mt Fraser, Beveridge – 110km/h
 - iii. From Amaroo Rd, Craigieburn to O’Herns Rd, Epping – 100km/h
- 11** In the northbound direction, the speed limit increases from 100km/h to 110km/h approximately 7.2 kilometres after Amaroo Rd in Craigieburn. This zone is **not used** for point-to-point due to the speed limit change.
- 12** In the southbound direction, the speed limit decreases from 110km/h to 80km/h approximately 7.6 kilometres after the Mount Fraser, Beveridge cameras.
 - a. The speed limit is 80km/h for approximately 1.7 kilometres due to the presence of a petrol station and other structures close to the freeway.
 - b. It increases to 100km/h before the Donnybrook Road overpass, approximately 5.2 kilometres before the Amaroo Road Bridge cameras at Craigieburn. This zone is **not used** for point-to-point due to the speed limit change.
- 13** Fixed digital road safety cameras operating along the Hume Freeway have two independent speed and time measurement devices. Vehicles travelling past the cameras have their speeds and times measured by each device independently, and these must correlate to within a small margin. Otherwise, no further action will be taken.
- 14** Data and images recorded by fixed digital road safety cameras in Victoria are also examined by at least two people, who must independently agree that the driver of the identified vehicle has committed an offence. Otherwise, no further action will be taken.
- 15** A schematic of the Hume Freeway system is attached as **Appendix A**.

NATURE OF COMPLAINTS

- 16** Complainants have asserted that they had been wrongly alleged to have been travelling at 108km/h. No other detected speed was complained about, only 108km/h. The coincidence of this alleged repetition of one speed was, apparently, a substantial (or whole?) part of the reason for disquiet.

SCOPE OF ENQUIRIES

- 17** I invited independent evidence, such as dash-cam footage of data from a GPS data log. The assertions seemed to be similar to assertions made in FaceBook and in the media in relation to the road safety cameras on Peninsula Link in 2016. In the circumstances, and without prejudging the Hume complaints, I drew on techniques for analysing data from my report regarding Peninsula Link dated 5 May 2017, which can be found at this location: <http://cameracommissioner.vic.gov.au/report-investigag-peninsula-link/>
- 18** I invited input from some of the complainants in these terms:

I would be prepared, if you choose, to seek out information on every one of your journeys on the Hume Freeway that my office can locate. If you also travel along the Hume Freeway in another vehicle, I would be interested in obtaining that vehicle’s registration as well.

I intend to make this same request to everyone who is raising these similar concerns about the Hume Freeway fixed digital road safety cameras, and I am doing so based on this office’s learnings from the Peninsula Link investigation earlier this year.

I would like to try to analyse your instantaneous speed and your average point-to-point speed, not only for each infringement, but for every journey which I locate amongst the data. If possible I would analyse the driving of vehicles around yours. I would seek to identify how many vehicles you overtook and how many you were overtaken by.

Please note that if the data can be obtained then I envisage publishing the results because this might be of interest to many people who come upon your FaceBook group. It might be of interest to all who hear of complaints in relation to the integrity of the fixed digital road safety cameras.

I seek your permission to identify you by name in any such publication, and also to publish your driving record, your allegations, photos and other details. The same request will be made for any people making this similar complaint regarding alleged inaccuracy of the fixed digital road safety cameras along Hume Freeway.

I suggest that you might want to obtain legal advice prior to consenting to release of this information and/or giving your consent.

I currently have no basis or information pointing to any systemic issue with the fixed digital road safety cameras along the Hume Freeway, I also respectfully invite you to provide me with independent evidence, such as dash-cam footage of your trips or GPS tracking data of your journeys. Please ensure any such footage or data is not edited.

19 Zero objective evidence was received as at 12 December 2017.

20 We also noted that whereas the strident assertion was of so many 108km/h infringements, we found that the individuals had been observed driving at a spread of different speeds above 100km/h.

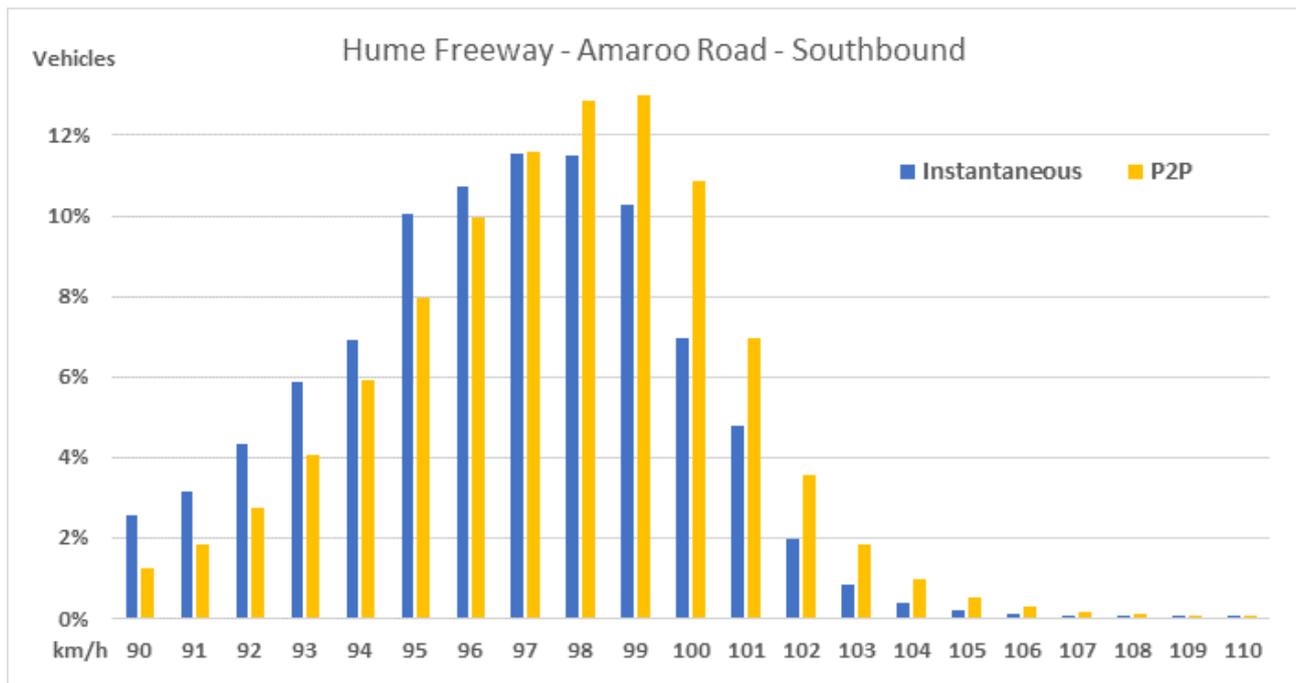
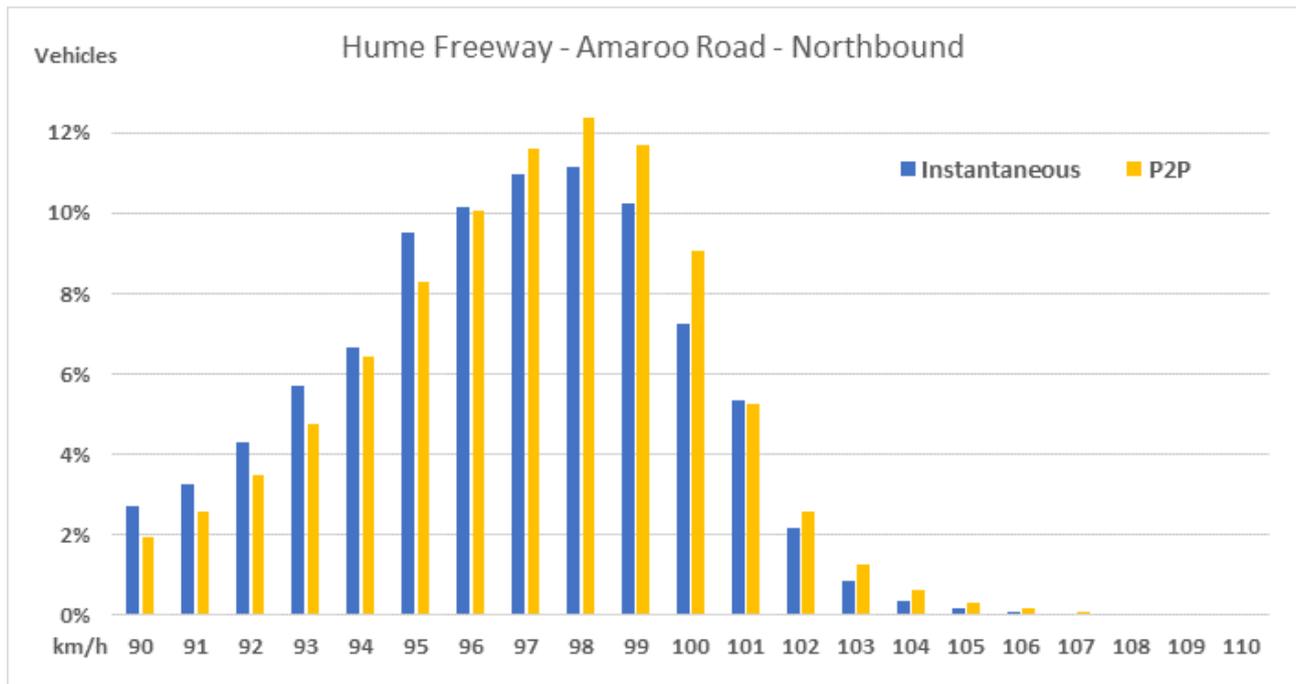
RESULTS OF ENQUIRIES

TESTING AND MAINTENANCE OF FIXED DIGITAL ROAD SAFETY CAMERAS

21 The fixed digital road safety cameras along the Hume Freeway are calibrated annually and monitored on a daily basis. They also undergo a comprehensive program of monthly maintenance and quarterly testing. On examination of these records there is no basis or information which would suggest any concerns with the accuracy of the fixed digital road safety cameras along the Hume Freeway.

ANALYSIS OF DATA RECORDED BY FIXED DIGITAL ROAD SAFETY CAMERAS

22 Data from over 70 million incidents was collated and analysed. Analysis of the data shows that vehicle speeds are accurately assessed. No contrary evidence has been received. The graphs depict every journey on the Hume Freeway recorded at Amaroo Road (both directions, and both instantaneous and point-to-point). From the manner of communication from the complainant group it might have been anticipated that there would be irregularities in the shape of the graph. There is no overrepresentation at 108km/h or at any other speed. The percentage of drivers travelling at speed over 100km/h in the 100km/h zone is 2.4% roughly the same as on another point-to-point road, Peninsula Link.



ADDRESSING ISSUES RAISED IN COMPLAINTS

23 In considering the nature of this information document, it was strongly noteworthy that the complainants did not immediately mention any infringements which they had received for speeding at over 100km/h **other than 108km/h**. On examination there was an array of speeds over 100km/h. We looked at the records of several of the group and each of those drivers had multiple different speeding infringements at a spread of speeds; certainly not just one speed. This could have been oversight, but on repetition by numerous individuals it looks more like a plan. The effect of that non-disclosure is to sharply imply a question over the integrity of the fixed digital road safety camera system. But on seeing the spread of speeds, and indeed to find that one member of the group had no speeds of 108 (indeed none under 115km/h) the method of self-selection and communication is clearer. The

analysis does not give rise to any concerns over the integrity of the fixed digital road safety camera system.

- 24** In our Peninsula Link investigation we went to great trouble to look at every basis of every complaint; we were unable to replicate the 108km/h reading as alleged. We found bad driving behaviour in general, and in particular by the very people who complained about Peninsula Link fixed digital road safety cameras.
- 25** I note that FaceBook, and social media generally, has no fact-check for its content. A person, for example, might write “I am from Mars” without sanction. There is much academic discussion in relation to the role of social media in social approval and social inclusion, and there may be many explanations of what is occurring when a cluster of complaints appears. However, the data does not support the cluster of complaints; other factors seem to be at play.

CONCLUSIONS

- 26** There is no evidence of inappropriate infringements being issued by the fixed digital road safety cameras at Amaroo Road on Hume Freeway. We have been unable to replicate the asserted experience of being wrongly assessed at illegal speed.
- 27** I am of the view that the complaints are without basis. A collection of people has set out to question the validity of their infringements, and in doing so, to attack the integrity of the fixed digital road safety camera system and the people who administer it. I have no evidence to suggest any basis to do so. Regrettably these kinds of complaints are easy to make and FaceBook and social media again appears to be an avenue for unmerited non-factual assertions. Facebook appears in this context as a performance, not a fact basis.
- 28** If a more detailed investigation is carried out in this context in the future, I recommend that complainants be asked: “Do you agree that (say) 105km/h in a 100 km/h zone is speeding?” and “Do you agree that 105km/h in a 100 km/h zone is dangerous?”

APPENDIX A

Hume Fwy fixed digital road safety camera diagram

All sites have two lanes and one emergency lane

