

Subject: Lack of Police traffic enforcement Western Australia
Date: Sunday, 15 August 2021 3:23:02 AM

Hi,

Is it possible I can provide input into this inquiry of the Joint standing committee on road safety please?

It is observed by myself that when there is insufficient traffic police resources of which currently is worse than it was 10 years ago, driver risk is increased because of criminals stealing cars (because Labor government doesn't want to spend money on jail) and law abiding drivers are offending (lazy culture creating bad habits) because they know they won't be caught.

When fines by traffic police would cover their costs such as wages, vehicles and equipment and insurance, it is bewildering why the numbers of patrol traffic cops are not increased until a balance is reached. What is the balance? The balance is when you have enough traffic police to be of a deterrent that drivers take less risks on the roads so as to decrease fine revenue to the point that government will subsidise the costs of the traffic cops.

This has never been tried as far as I know.

Many drivers are using their phones illegally in Western Australia even though fines were more than doubled recently to \$1000!!!!

What didn't happen is the application of boots on the ground to actually effect the new laws. In media speak they call it a blitz or a few week surge of policing. I have never seen this since the introduction of speed cameras about 22 years ago.

WA and QLD traffic police resources are so thin that it is now described as the new Stealth fighter. They are unseen and therefore there is no deterrence. Never do I see traffic cops pulling motorists over, but everyday I see bad behaviour and bad habits, selfish and impatient driving.

Driving on the Bruce highway in 2012 I never saw a traffic police patrol car.

This mirrors Western Australia as well. Which has possibly around 100 traffic police personnel which 20% of these are always going to traffic crashes and thus are not even patrolling.

Hoons are now openly operating in WA's major shopping centres doing burnouts and even in Midland just metres from the central traffic operations centre!!

When traffic police operations and increasing personal and unit (vehicle) numbers therefore is not a budget consideration (since fines will finance the activity of traffic police patrols and deterrence through fines), it is not understood why state Governments are not pursuing this path.

Trucks are also a major danger with a considerable percentage using upper drugs like amphetamines and crystal meth to stay awake. This form of illegal transport operations are major factors in fatigue related road fatalities and erratic driving.

Police are not able to target this with any success as I have already raised the matter of effective deterrence where there is enough police that government will have to subsidise the costs.

Random drug and breath tests are conducted by booze buses yet do not achieve the goal either of reducing drug and alcohol affected drivers.

25 years ago police could target drinkers from pubs and even parties but these days it is using a bus to bulk test everyone.

Rather than target the problem they are targeting everyone.

Instead of using something like Compstat and compiling information and intelligence of problem drivers they do random testing for any driver. The yield is very low.

Then when they do find a driver who has been drinking for years without being caught, they get a reading of .3!!! They shouldn't be shocked at that but at their technique.

These days you can be over the limit and leave the local pub in WA and not get caught.

Budget cuts and the coronavirus have caused reductions in real police numbers.

It has been suggested to the Police minister to form a WA Police reserve of 2000 personnel so in future when another disaster or pandemic hits they can fall back on this somewhat.

But numbers of police in WA are so low no one can expect any major changes in road safety for years to come.

I have dashcam video of driver behaviour which some members may be interested in watching.

You will be able to see that police enforcing the law is almost zero. In fact I can state that in thousands of kilometres of driving I have not seen one traffic police car on dashcam pulling a motorist over. It is very revealing.

I would guess for every 100,000 offences, police will issue 1 fine. This is for the entire road system in WA. This is hard to measure because so many offences are occurring and very few are being reported by the public/eyewitnesses, such as bystanders near a stop sign where daily cars violate the law by 60 per hour. Even when members of the public do capture dashcam of a driver running a red light they are reluctant to go to court thus ensuring no fine is issued.

Even speed cameras (permanent cameras are not manned more than 20% of the time due to deterrence) are moved because of the deterrence factor.

That is why having traffic police moving in vehicles are able to be highly effective compared to speed cameras, because they are "everywhere". They can see a multitude of offences.

Speed cameras are still useful, they are part of the package, but unfortunately they are relied on very heavily which is ineffective when seeing that human traffic police officers can do a far more effective deterrence option by having flashing lights on the side of the road when issuing fines to motorists.

When motorists see more traffic police pulling other motorists over they are highly deterred and change their behaviour, even temporarily.

And having effective traffic policing through the balance theory will ensure if motorists refuse to change their habits, they will lose their license anyway.

Sincerely,

Daniel McAloon