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SAFETY-THEATRE

How Australian "road safety" became a revenue and surveillance machine — and what the government's own audits, budget papers, crash data and legislation actually show.

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Every figure is drawn from government audits, budget papers, legislation, peer-reviewed studies and reputable reporting, and is labelled **verified**, **reported** or **contested**. Verify against the primary source before relying on it — that is the whole point.

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A plan to halve deaths – missing by a fifth, and rising.

The National Road Safety Strategy 2021–30 promised to halve the road toll by 2030 on the way to "Vision Zero." Five years in, deaths have risen almost every year — and governments can't even measure most of what they promised to deliver.

What was actually promised

The Strategy, agreed by all federal, state and territory transport ministers, sets hard targets against a 2018–20 baseline of 1,142 deaths a year:

- "Reduce the number of deaths from road crashes by at least 50 per cent by 2030 to fewer than 571." VERBATIM
- "Reduce the number of serious injuries by at least 30 per cent by 2030" — but the document itself calls this "an interim target." VERBATIM
- Long-term goal: "zero fatalities and serious injuries by 2050" — the "Safe System" / Vision Zero framing. VERBATIM

Source: [National Road Safety Strategy 2021–30](#), pp.9–10.

What's actually happening

To halve the toll by 2030, deaths need to be *falling* by roughly 50–60 a year. They are doing the opposite.

+22%

Increase in the annual road toll since the Strategy began in 2021 — the independent Australian Automobile Association reports the 12-month toll has risen year-on-year for more than **30 consecutive months**, running roughly **20% above** the "on-track" trajectory.

"The rate of annual road deaths per 100,000 population... declined over the five years to 2020, but since that low, has increased at an average of 3% per year... total fatalities have also been increasing by approximately 4% per year."

— BITRE, **Road Trauma Australia 2024** (<https://www.bitre.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/road-trauma-australia-2024.pdf>)

"Road deaths are rising, and governments are reluctant to report the data needed to measure most of these targets. This means our current plan looks more like a wish-list than a credible strategy."

— Australian Automobile Association, **Benchmarking the Performance of the NRSS** (https://www.aaa.asn.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/230514_AAA_Benchmarking-NRSS-Report-Mar-QTR-2023-WEB.pdf)

They can only measure 2 of their own 5 targets

The Strategy has five headline performance indicators. According to the AAA's benchmarking, only two can actually be measured, because the underlying national data is never published.

Key performance indicator	Can it be measured?
Total national road deaths	YES
Deaths of children aged 7 and under	YES
Serious injuries (national)	NO NATIONAL DATA
Deaths in city CBD areas	NOT REPORTED

Key performance indicator	Can it be measured?
Deaths on national highways / high-speed network	NOT REPORTED

"Only two of the Strategy's five key performance indicators — total national deaths and deaths of young children — can be accurately measured."

— AAA, Benchmarking the Performance of the NRSS (Mar Qtr 2023)

A strategy you can't measure is a strategy you can't be held to. The AAA has repeatedly urged that federal transport funding to the states be made **conditional on releasing the crash data** — a call governments have not adopted.

The sleight of hand

THE CLAIM	THE REALITY
"We follow a Safe System / Vision Zero approach: safe roads, safe speeds, safe vehicles, safe road users. Enforcement is one pillar among many."	The pillar that scaled fastest is automated enforcement — the one that also generates revenue and surveillance data. Deaths keep rising while camera fine income is budgeted to grow. The infrastructure pillar (median barriers, sealed shoulders, star-rated roads) is chronically underfunded relative to the fines collected in its name.

Be fair — and be precise

The strongest, most defensible criticism here is **not** "enforcement never works." It's that (a) the toll is rising, (b) most targets can't be measured because the data is withheld, and (c) the interventions that scaled are the ones that raise money and gather data. That is an accountability failure, and it is documented in the government's own reporting.

This isn't the first failure

The *previous* National Road Safety Strategy (2011–2020) set a target to cut deaths and serious injuries by **at least 30% by 2020**. It missed. A 2018 independent inquiry (Woolley & Crozier) found progress had "come to a virtual standstill," deaths rose in 2015 and 2016, serious injuries were increasing, and — a decade in — there was still **no nationally agreed way to even measure serious injuries**. The inquiry called for "dramatic change... given the inadequately acknowledged national road injury epidemic."

So the pattern is now two strategies deep: ambitious targets, missing data, missed results — while the enforcement-and-revenue machinery expands regardless.

Sources: [Inquiry into the National Road Safety Strategy 2011–2020](#); [NRSS 2011–20 progress](#).

"Vision Zero" – a goal that can justify anything

The strategy's north star is **Vision Zero** (from Sweden, 1997): zero deaths and serious injuries by 2050. As an aspiration it's admirable. As a policy lever it's powerful in a dangerous way — because if the only acceptable number is zero, then *any* measure, however intrusive or however marginal, can be justified as a step toward it.

Scholars reviewing the critiques note Vision Zero has been "accused of being paternalistic and unjust," with some measures "threatening the freedom, autonomy, and privacy of road users," and argue an "ideology of absolutes is morally incongruent with the fallible nature of human beings." The road-safety economist Rune Elvik warned decades ago that an uncompromising prioritisation of safety "would divert economic resources from other societal objectives" without cost-benefit discipline. A goal that can never be disproved is a goal that can license anything.

Sources: [Arguments Against Vision Zero: A Literature Review \(Springer\)](#); Elvik, Accident Analysis & Prevention. Framed as documented critique, not the view of the strategy's authors.

The propaganda you paid for

Here's the part they never advertise: a slice of the fine money is spent *advertising the fines*. Governments recycle the revenue into emotionally-engineered campaigns whose job is to manufacture your consent — to make you believe every camera, limit and levy is love, so you'll keep paying and keep quiet.

-1 in every \$10

In 2021–22 Transport for NSW spent about **\$27.2 million** on road-safety campaigns while raising roughly **\$291 million** from speed cameras — meaning close to **~9%** of the fine take was ploughed back into telling you the fines are for your own good. Victoria's TAC bundles around **\$103 million** a year into "road safety and marketing."

And it's deliberately manipulative. The TAC celebrated 25 years of its ad campaigns under the banner "**Mission: to upset, outrage and appal**" — stating the emotional-manipulation objective out loud. Yet when auditors looked for proof it works, they couldn't find it:

"The lack of a complying cost-benefit analysis or evidence of its long-term impact meant that effectiveness **could not be confidently demonstrated.**"

— NSW Auditor-General, on a road-safety campaign running annually since 2013

The academic literature on fear-appeal advertising says the same: shock tactics grab attention but their effect on actual behaviour is "mixed and inconsistent," with a documented wear-out effect. Meanwhile the brand machine expands — "Towards Zero" logos, 28-year AFL and cricket sponsorships, a "Road to Zero" attraction embedded in school excursions — normalising enforcement to children before they can drive. It's a state-funded loop: fine the public, spend their money persuading them the fine was a gift, repeat.

And it isn't working on the public either

Despite all of it, the Victorian Road Safety Camera Commissioner's own survey found the share of people who believe cameras exist mainly to **raise revenue rose from 53% (2020) to 65% (2024)**. Note the tell in the branding: the deliberate shift from "accident" to "crash" (to imply every death was preventable and therefore someone must be fined) — pushed by the very agency Victoria still calls the Transport *Accident* Commission.

Sources: NSW Auditor-General, Government Advertising 2022–23; Mumbrella (TAC "upset, outrage and appal"); TAC Annual Report; Road Safety Camera Commissioner survey; fear-appeal review (Carey & McDermott meta-analysis). The ~9% ratio pairs same-year NSW figures; the TAC \$103M is a bundle of research/education/marketing.

Policy by numbers they won't show you

When NSW removed mobile speed-camera warning signs in 2020, it justified the move with Monash University modelling claiming the changes could save **"up to 43 lives"** a year. That modelling was **never fully released** to the public. The government used unpublished numbers to strip the warnings, watched fines explode — then, in 2023, **reversed course and restored the signs anyway**, against the logic of its own modelling.

Auditors keep making recommendations that go the other way. The 2011 Victorian Auditor-General urged independent testing of camera accuracy and evaluation of never-assessed point-to-point cameras. The 2018 NSW Auditor-General questioned deployment hours and network deterrence. The public's own view is hardening: the Victorian Road Safety Camera Commissioner's survey found **65% now believe the main purpose of cameras is to raise revenue** — up from 53% in 2020.

Sources: ACRS (the "43 lives" modelling); VAGO (2011); Road Safety Camera Commissioner survey.

Who runs it

The **Office of Road Safety** was established on **1 July 2019** as a branch of the federal Department of Infrastructure, to coordinate the national strategy and run the **National Road Safety Data Hub** (<https://datahub.roadsafety.gov.au/>). The Hub is where the missing data *should* live. The Strategy explicitly commits "to regularly publish progress on implementation, targets and safety performance indicators, enabled by a national data hub." That commitment is, on the AAA's assessment, unmet for three of five targets.

See **Sources** → **The Strategy** for every document cited here.

Follow the money.

When a program is really about safety, success means the numbers fall and the revenue dries up. When it's about revenue, the fines are *forecast to grow* — and treasuries quietly bank on them. Here is what the states publish about themselves.

The headline numbers

Two states publish a clean camera-revenue figure. Both are near half a billion dollars a year — each.

State	Camera fine revenue	Year	Note
Victoria	\$473 million	2023-24	Official (vic.gov.au)
Queensland	\$464.3 million	2023-24	~\$337m net after \$127.3m costs
WA (Road Trauma Trust Acct)	~\$123.2 million	2022-23	Infringement revenue, audited

Sources: [Victorian Government — Revenue from fines](#); Queensland Dept of Transport & Main Roads Annual Report (CDOP); [WA Road Safety Council Annual Report 2023-24](#).

63%

Share of Queensland's 608,794 speeding fines in 2023-24 that were for driving **10 km/h or less** over the limit. The revenue engine is low-range, low-risk detection — not the reckless outlier. OFFICIAL

It's budgeted to grow

The clearest tell that this is revenue, not safety: governments write rising fine income into their *forward estimates* years in advance. You can't forecast growing "safety failures" and call the program a success.

Jurisdiction	Forward estimate
NSW — "Fines, regulatory fees & other revenues"	\$3.59bn (2024-25) → \$3.90bn → \$4.04bn → \$4.15bn (2027-28)
Queensland — camera program (CDOP)	Forecast around \$466–534m for 2024-25
SA — mobile-phone cameras alone	\$7.6m (2023-24) rising to \$21.1m/yr indexed from 2026-27
Queensland — camera revenue growth	\$274.5m (2021-22) → \$465.8m (2022-23) = +70%

Sources: [NSW Budget 2024-25, Budget Paper 1 \(Revenue\)](#); SA Budget 2023-24; QLD annual report / budget. The NSW line bundles more than camera fines — but it is explicitly forecast to rise every year.

Note the honest caveat on NSW: that budget line includes regulatory fees and "other," so it isn't pure camera revenue. What it unambiguously shows is a treasury **planning for fine and fee income to climb** — the opposite of what a safety program that's working would produce.

The smoking gun: NSW pulls the warning signs

If cameras exist to slow you at a hazard, warning you is the whole point. In late 2020 NSW removed the warning signs from mobile speed cameras. What happened next is the cleanest natural experiment in the country.

BEFORE SIGNS REMOVED – OCT 2020	AFTER SIGNS REMOVED – FEB 2021
~ 3,222 low-range (≤ 10 km/h over) fines that month.	~ 27,855 low-range fines that month — a jump of roughly 1,595% .

In March 2021 alone, an estimated **10,000 extra fines raised an additional \$6.33 million**. Widely reported figures put the annual low-range take rising from about **\$4 million to about \$45 million** REPORTED. Then, after sustained public backlash, the incoming government **restored the warning signs in April 2023**:

"Fines issued from mobile speed cameras have fallen nearly 90 per cent since warning signs were returned to the roadside in late April... approximately 6,650 fines were issued... compared to 55,387 fines in the corresponding period in 2022 — an annual reduction of 88 per cent."

– NSW Government media release, 16 July 2023

Read that again

Restoring the warnings — the thing that actually slows drivers *before* the hazard — cut fines by ~90%. If the fines were a proxy for danger, danger fell 90% overnight. It didn't. The fines were the point.

Sources: [Border Mail](#); NSW Parliament Staysafe Committee, *Mobile speed camera enforcement programs in NSW*; [NSW Government \(2023\)](#).

"It all goes back into road safety" – except it doesn't

Every state now "ring-fences" (hypothecates) camera revenue into a road-safety fund. It's the standard rebuttal to the revenue accusation. There are two problems with it.

State	Ring-fenced fund	The catch
NSW	Community Road Safety Fund	Underspent every year since 2019-20 — from 12% to 20% underspent
WA	Road Trauma Trust Account	~\$119.8m sitting unspent at end 2023-24; Auditor-General criticised its management
VIC	Better Roads Victoria Trust	"Every dollar" reinvested — but into general road projects, not just safety
QLD	CDOP reinvestment (TORUM Act 1995)	Only the surplus <i>above</i> program costs is reinvested
SA	Community Road Safety Fund	All except the Victims of Crime Levy

Problem one: hypothecation doesn't mean the money is *spent* on safety. NSW and WA both sit on huge, persistent underspends — a road-safety fund that isn't spent on road safety is just a tax with a nice name.

Problem two: hypothecation actually *strengthens* the perverse incentive. Once a road-safety budget *depends* on fine income, the system needs the fines to keep flowing — the exact opposite of an agency working to make itself obsolete.

Sources: [NSW Audit Office — Regional Road Safety](#); [WA Auditor-General — Road Trauma Trust Account](#); state government fund pages.

The parking racket

The same "safety and amenity" cover, one rung down at the councils. Parking fines are a budget line — forecast, relied on, and enforced to quota.

- **City of Sydney: \$42.4 million** from 265,181 "ticketless" parking fines in 2023. Across 48 NSW councils, the ticketless system issued **\$139.5 million** in one year — parking is ~45% of *all* NSW penalty notices. The state's own Finance Minister admitted the scheme "eroded trust."
- **Brisbane City Council: ~\$34.4 million** from 170,677 fines in 2023-24 — about **\$94,000 a day**.
- **Quotas:** the union representing City of Sydney rangers alleged a de-facto benchmark of **~18 tickets per shift**, with those falling short facing performance management. (The council calls them "expectations," not quotas.)

And when it's checked, it collapses. A Victorian Ombudsman investigation forced councils to **refund ~\$24 million across ~250,000 fines** — because for a decade they'd unlawfully outsourced fine "reviews" to a private contractor. The Ombudsman found a council officer had approved 107 reviews in one minute — "about half a second per review."

A private "fine" is not a fine

On private land — shopping centres, hospital car parks — operators like Wilson Parking or Care Park can't issue government fines. Their "penalty" is a **breach-of-contract invoice**, and tribunals have repeatedly found the amounts to be **unenforceable penalties** (e.g. *Vico v Care Park*, VCAT 2014). Consumer Affairs Victoria confirms these debts can't appear on your credit report. Get advice before you pay.

Sources: [NSW Government \(ticketless parking\)](#); [Victorian Ombudsman](#); [Consumer Affairs Victoria](#); [Consumer Action Law Centre](#).

The phone-camera goldmine

NSW's mobile-phone detection cameras earned **\$7.1 million in their first month** (March 2020) and roughly **\$56 million in their first nine months**. Every other state has since rolled out the same technology — see [Surveillance](#) for how they work and what they photograph.

Full citations on the [Sources](#) page.

A fine pays for the next fine.

Speed-camera money doesn't disappear into "road safety." In NSW it flows into a fund that buys *more cameras* and pays for *more police enforcement* — administered by the same department that runs the cameras. The people who decide how hard to police you are funded by how hard they police you. Here is that loop, in the government's own numbers.

Cameras alone raise about a tenth of the police budget

The simplest way to see the incentive: compare what the cameras take in fines against what it costs to run the entire state police force. It's not a rounding error — it's roughly one dollar in ten.

[interactive chart – see the live site]

In Victoria, road-safety cameras issued **\$473 million** in fines in 2023-24 VERIFIED — about **a tenth** of Victoria Police's ~\$4.5 billion in government funding. In NSW, speed-camera revenue of roughly **\$636 million** REPORTED sits at around **11–12%** of the NSW Police budget (~\$5.51 billion). When a slice that large depends on writing tickets, "how much should we enforce?" stops being a pure safety question.

Sources: [Victorian Government — revenue from fines](#); [Victoria Police Annual Report 2024-25](#); NSW camera revenue via a NSW Parliament question-on-notice (reported); [NSW Police Annual Report 2024-25](#). Years don't perfectly align (fines 2023-24 vs police funding 2024-25) — read the ratios as "roughly a tenth," not to the dollar.

The Community Road Safety

Fund

Set up in 2012 (operating from 2013), the NSW **Community Road Safety Fund** receives **all** camera-detected speeding fines, red-light fines and mobile-phone & seatbelt fines, topped up from consolidated revenue. It is administered by **Transport for NSW** — the agency that runs the camera program — while Revenue NSW issues the penalty notices. VERIFIED

Year	Total fund spend	Of which from camera fines
2022-23	\$454m	\$283m
2023-24	\$479m	\$261m

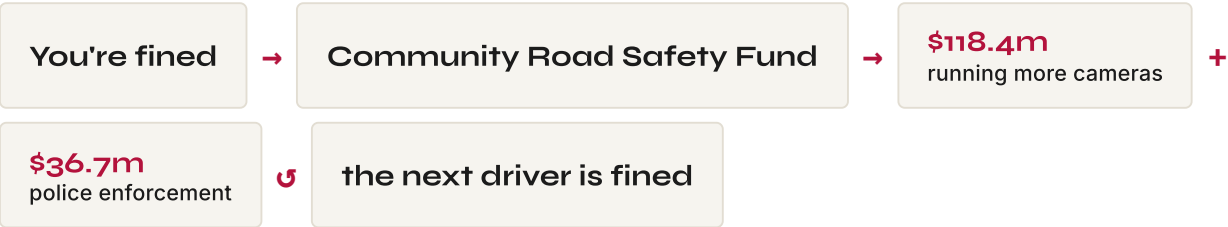
The clause that closes the loop

Money in the fund that isn't required for road-safety spending **may be paid into the Consolidated Fund** — general government revenue. So a levy raised in the name of safety can, by design, become ordinary income. That is the legal hinge on which "safety" turns into "budget."

Source: [Transport for NSW — NSW Road Safety Progress Report 2024](#) (pp. 53-54).
Fund machinery sits mainly in the Transport Administration Act 1988; we quote the mechanism, not a section number.

The loop, in their own numbers

Follow one dollar. It leaves your account as a fine and comes back as the budget to catch the next driver — more cameras, more police. This isn't an accusation; it's the fund's own spending line.



In 2023-24 the fund spent **\$118.4 million** running the automated camera enforcement program itself, and **\$36.7 million** directly funding police enforcement (it was \$29.7m the year before). Money taken from drivers in fines is spent catching more drivers. The enforcement pays for the enforcement. VERIFIED

Source: [Transport for NSW — Road Safety Progress Report 2024](#) (Community Road Safety Fund expenditure, pp. 53-54).

Collected for safety – then not spent on safety

If the fines were really about saving lives, the money would be spent, fast, where people die. The NSW Auditor-General found the opposite.

- ✗ **Underspent every year since 2019** — the shortfall grew from **12%** (2019-20) to **20%** (2022-23). The 2022-23 underspend was put at about **\$104 million**.
- ✗ **\$73 million wasn't allocated to any region at all**, and \$13.5m earmarked for regional road infrastructure went unspent — even though most road deaths are regional and the regional toll hasn't fallen since 2012.
- ✗ **No regional road-trauma reduction targets** — the agency collecting "safety" money set no measurable safety goal for the places that need it most.

In fairness, the Auditor-General attributed the underspend to COVID, disasters and skills shortages, not deliberate diversion. But that's the point: whether by intent or dysfunction, the drive to *collect* never wavers, while the duty to *spend it on safety* does.

Source: [NSW Auditor-General — Regional Road Safety \(Nov 2023\)](#). VERIFIED

Budgeted to keep climbing

A government serious about ending speeding would budget for fine revenue to fall toward zero. Instead, NSW's forward estimates pencil fines in to keep rising, out to the horizon.

[interactive chart – see the live site]

The NSW Budget's "Fines" line runs from **\$713m** (2023-24 actual) to a forecast **\$793m** by 2028-29 — never once projected to drop. VERIFIED Queensland tells the same story: its camera program took roughly **\$275m** in 2021-22 and about **\$466m** the next year — a ~70% jump — all, by law, "reinvested in road safety." REPORTED The machine is planned to grow.

Sources: [NSW Budget 2025-26, Budget Paper No.1, Table 5.7](#); Queensland CDOP figures via government statements (reported).

What we're *not* claiming

You'll often hear that police work to secret "ticket quotas" or revenue targets. We looked, and couldn't stand that up with a primary source — so we don't assert it. The honest argument is stronger and needs no conspiracy: **when the body that decides how hard to police you is funded by fining you, the incentive is built into the structure.** No memo required.

Know how the fund is really spent — or what the targets really are?

We work with government whistleblowers. If you're inside a police force, a transport agency, a camera contractor or a treasury office and you can show what the public can't see, reach us confidentially at whistle@theradicalparty.com. Every figure on this page came from the public record; the next one could come from you.

Cross-references: [The Money](#) · [By State](#) (fund underspend jurisdiction by jurisdiction) · [Contracts & Corruption](#) · full citations on [Sources](#).

Socialise the cost. Privatise the profit.

Different racket, same trick. You pay to build the road through fuel excise, rego and taxes — then pay again, forever, to a private company to drive on it. The public carries the risk; a monopoly keeps the money; and the meter only ever goes up.

One company, almost every toll road

Transurban owns or operates **11 of NSW's 13 toll roads** — plus Melbourne's CityLink and most of Brisbane's network. It is, in the words of the NSW Government's own review, "the only non-government owner of motorways in the state."

Transurban FY2024	Figure
Proportional toll revenue	A\$3,535 million
Proportional EBITDA (margin 73%)	A\$2,632 million
Statutory profit after tax	A\$376 million
Distribution to security holders	62¢ (more than the profit)

Note the gap: it pays out to investors more than it books as profit — a feature of its "stapled trust" structure, which is also why it **pays little or no company tax** in many years (one half-year: A\$21m tax payable on ~A\$2bn of revenue; a prior half-year recorded a A\$97m tax *benefit*). That's legal — and that's the point. The structure is built to minimise tax on money extracted from a public necessity.

Sources: [NSW Government \(Fels toll review\)](#); [Transurban FY24 results](#); [Michael West Media \(tax structure\)](#).

The meter only goes up – for decades

These aren't temporary tolls that switch off once the road is paid for. They're locked in for a generation, with escalation clauses that outrun inflation by design.

Road	Toll escalation & end date
WestConnex (M4/M5E/M8)	Rises by the greater of CPI or 4% every year — to ~2060
CityLink (Melbourne)	4.25% p.a. from 2019; concession extended to 2045
Hills M2 / Eastern Distributor	Adjusted quarterly under long-term contracts
Westlink M7	Concession extended to 2051 "funded by increased toll revenue"

The independent toll review led by former competition tsar Allan Fels found Sydney motorists now pay about **\$2.5 billion a year** — an estimated **\$195 billion over 35 years** — across a "poorly-functioning patchwork" of 13 roads and 10 contracts "designed with financial returns back to toll road operators in mind rather than managing traffic."

Sources: [NSW Government / Fels review](#); [CityLink concession](#). Exact escalation formulae are set in concession deeds; the "greater of CPI or 4%" and "4.25%" terms are widely reported — verify in the deed for precise wording.

Build it once, charge for it four times over

WestConnex cost about **A\$16.8 billion** to build (itself a blowout from ~A\$10bn, with the Auditor-General finding creative accounting hid over A\$4bn more). It is forecast to collect about **A\$64 billion** in tolls to 2060 — roughly **four times** its build cost. The government then sold it to a Transurban-led consortium in two tranches: **A\$9.26bn for 51% (2018)** and **A\$11.1bn for the rest (2021)** — A\$20.4bn total — handing decades of that toll stream to private hands.

Heads they win, tails you pay

When toll roads *fail*, the private investors lose — but the tolling never stops; the assets are just bought cheap and keep charging. Brisbane's AirportLink cost ~**A\$5.6bn to build** and was bought out of administration for **A\$1.87bn** — "less than half the price it cost to build" — and kept tolling. Sydney's Lane Cove Tunnel: into receivership, bought by Transurban for A\$630m, kept tolling. Cross City Tunnel and Brisbane's Clem7: same story. The public built them; private buyers scooped the toll rights at a discount.

Sources: [NSW Auditor-General \(WestConnex\)](#); [NSW Treasury \(sale\)](#); [SBS \(AirportLink\)](#); [Lane Cove Tunnel](#).

The clauses that rig it against the public

The real scandal is in the contracts. Sydney's **Cross City Tunnel** deal reportedly required the State to keep surrounding roads closed to funnel traffic into the tunnel — and to **compensate the operator up to A\$100 million a year for 30 years** if it didn't, plus compensation for any public-transport improvements that reduced tunnel traffic. Reopening the closed public roads was said to risk up to **A\$1 billion** in taxpayer compensation.

This is the template: governments guarantee private profits, hand over monopoly pricing for decades, agree not to compete with their own roads, and lose oversight once the asset is sold (after the WestConnex sale the Auditor-General "no longer has the mandate" to scrutinise its costs). Transurban, for its part, donated **over A\$730,000** to the major parties between 2000 and 2015. Socialise the cost. Privatised the profit. Silence the scrutiny.

Sources: [Cross City Tunnel](#); [NSW Auditor-General](#); [Australian Greens \(donations\)](#). Some compensation-clause specifics are from contemporaneous reporting of confidential deeds — treat exact figures as reported.

You already paid for the road

Australians pay **fuel excise, registration, stamp duty** and **GST** — nominally to fund roads. Then a toll is layered on top, paid to a private monopoly, escalating faster than inflation, for decades after the concrete is paid off. It's the same philosophy as the speed camera: a public good repackaged as a private revenue stream, sold to you as something being done *for* you.

Where people die vs where the cameras are.

If cameras were sited for safety, they'd cluster where people die. They don't. Australians die on rural roads; the cameras — and the money — sit on busy urban arterials, at the bottom of hills and in daytime 40 zones.

The mismatch, in the government's own numbers

-2 in 3

Australian road deaths occur in **regional and remote areas** — where most people don't live and most fixed cameras aren't. Per-capita fatality rates are **4–5× higher** in regional areas and **10–15× higher** in remote areas than in major cities.

In NSW in 2024, **234 of 340 road deaths (69%) were on regional roads** — despite only about a third of the population living there. The Minister said it herself. Yet, as the government concedes, "most fixed speed cameras in NSW are installed in metropolitan areas." The 2024 plan to add thousands of regional mobile-camera sites is itself an admission that the network was pointed at the wrong places.

"More than two thirds of those people died on regional roads, despite only a third of our population living in the regional areas of NSW."

– NSW Minister for Regional Transport & Roads, 2024

Sources: BITRE, Road Trauma Australia 2024; NRSS Regional & Remote fact sheets; TfNSW 2023 Enforcement Camera Review.

What actually kills – and why a city camera can't stop it

The biggest killers on Australian roads are crash types no urban speed or red-light camera can address.

Crash type	Share of fatal crashes	Why cameras miss it
Single-vehicle run-off-road	39%	96% are single-vehicle ; half in 100+ km/h rural zones. Fixed by barriers & shoulders, not cameras.
Head-on	20%	Rural high-speed roads; needs median barriers.
Combined (run-off + head-on)	~59%	Overwhelmingly rural & infrastructure-driven.

Meanwhile hospitalised *injuries* are ~67% urban — so the cameras sit where the fender-benders are, not where the fatalities are. The fix for rural death is un-billable: median barriers, sealed shoulders, rumble strips, better star-rated roads.

Source: [BITRE Information Sheet 112 — Run-off-road crashes 2016–2020](#).

The goldmine cameras

A handful of individual cameras generate staggering sums — and the most lucrative ones sit at engineered "gotcha" spots, not documented blackspots.

Camera	Take	The mechanics
Rosanna Rd / Darebin St, Heidelberg (VIC)	53,000+ drivers, \$11M+ in one year	Limit drops to 40 km/h daytime on a major through-road
Eastern Distributor, Darlinghurst (NSW)	\$4.56M/yr	Fast urban motorway — "NSW's most notorious"
Hale St, Paddington (QLD)	~11,000 fines/yr	Downhill slope + a lower limit than the rest of the bypass

Camera	Take	The mechanics
Hannell St, Wickham (NSW)	8,283 phone fines, ~\$3.3M (2023-24)	Single mobile-phone camera site, many times any other

Queensland's own description of Hale Street is telling: "the combination of a downhill slope and a lower speed limit than the rest of the [bypass] manages to catch out thousands of inattentive drivers." That's not a description of a hazard. It's a description of a *trap*.

Sources: [CarExpert \(VIC/QLD top earners\)](#); [NSW top-earning cameras \(Revenue NSW data\)](#); [Newcastle Herald \(Hannell St\)](#). Rankings rotate year to year; figures are pinned to the year reported. Crash-history at these sites is not published — a prime FOI target.

Picture it: enforcement up, deaths not down

The whole justification is "more enforcement = fewer deaths." So watch the two lines. Camera revenue climbs; the national road toll fell for two decades on *engineering and safer cars*, bottomed in 2020, and has **risen every year since** — through the biggest camera-enforcement expansion in Australian history.

Australian road deaths, 2000–2025

[interactive chart – see the live site]

Source: BITRE Australian Road Deaths Database (2000–2022) + BITRE monthly bulletins (2023–25). Deaths fell ~1,817 → ~1,097 to 2020, then rose to ~1,317 in 2025.

NSW speed & red-light camera fine revenue, by financial year

[interactive chart – see the live site]

Source: Revenue NSW open dataset DSF010 (all speeding & red-light camera offences). The 2020–22 spike lines up exactly with the removal of mobile-camera warning signs (Nov 2020); revenue is climbing again to a record ~\$347M in 2025–26. Note: NSW camera revenue vs national deaths are different geographies — shown together to make the enforcement-vs-outcome point, not a like-for-like comparison.

Revenue up. Toll up. Both at once.

The cleanest test of "revenue vs safety": when fine income soars *and* the death toll rises together, the fines are not tracking danger.

- **Queensland:** camera revenue jumped **+70%** (from \$274.5M to \$465.8M) — and deaths rose ~5% in the same window.
- **Victoria:** forecast to collect around **\$1 billion** in fines — while recording more deaths than the year before.
- **Nationally:** over **80%** of all speeding, phone, seatbelt and red-light fines in 2024 were issued by automated systems, not police.

The fair counter-point

To keep this honest: TfNSW's 2023 review found fixed speed cameras cut casualty crashes by about **17%** at the sites where they operate. Cameras *can* work where they're genuinely needed. The scandal isn't that cameras function — it's that they're pointed at revenue, not at the rural roads where Australians actually die.

Sources: [CarExpert \(QLD/VIC revenue vs toll\)](#); [WhichCar \(80% automated\)](#); [TfNSW 2023 review \(17% figure\)](#).

What the studies actually say.

"The evidence shows cameras save lives." Does it? The highest-tier reviews have no randomised trials, rate the evidence "moderate quality at best," and a measurable chunk of the apparent "camera effect" is a statistical illusion called regression to the mean.

The evidence base is weaker than the slogans

The **Cochrane systematic review** — the gold standard of evidence synthesis — looked at speed cameras across 35 studies and concluded the direction was positive but the size could not be trusted:

"...an overall magnitude of this effect is currently **not deducible due to heterogeneity and lack of methodological rigour.**" The included studies were "of overall **moderate quality at best.**"

— Wilson, Willis et al., **Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews** (<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/21069682/>) (2010)

Crucially, Cochrane found **no randomised controlled trials** — every study is an observational before-and-after, the design most vulnerable to statistical distortion. The first systematic review (Pilkington & Kinra, *BMJ* 2005) reviewed 14 studies, rated none high-quality, and concluded the "**level of evidence is relatively poor.**"

Sources: **Cochrane review (2010)**; **Pilkington & Kinra, BMJ 2005**. Note: "positive direction, untrustworthy magnitude" is the fair reading — not "cameras do nothing."

Regression to the mean: the

illusion in the numbers

Cameras get placed where crashes recently spiked. Crashes then fall back toward normal on their own — and the fall gets credited to the camera. This is *regression to the mean* (RTM), and governments' own evaluations show it inflates the results.

Roads with a high number of crashes in one period "are likely to have fewer during the following period, **even if no measures are taken...** the effects of the intervention may be **overestimated**."

— European Commission road-safety directorate, on RTM in speed enforcement

25% → 19%

The UK's own four-year national camera evaluation found the headline collision reduction fell from about **25% to 19%** once the regression-to-the-mean effect was properly removed. Roughly **a quarter of the "camera effect" was statistical illusion**, not the camera.

The meta-analyst Høye flagged that a headline **–51% fatal-crash** figure "could partly be explained by regression to the mean." And Erke's red-light-camera meta-analysis found results are "**more favourable when there is a lack of control for regression to the mean**" — i.e. the sloppier the study, the better cameras look.

Sources: [UK 4-year camera evaluation \(2005\)](#), [Appendix H \(Mountain & Maher\)](#); [Høye](#), [EU SafetyCube synopsis](#); [Erke \(2009\)](#), [Accident Analysis & Prevention](#).

Red-light cameras trade one crash for another

Red-light cameras reduce dangerous side-on ("T-bone") crashes — but reliably **increase rear-end collisions** as drivers slam on the brakes to avoid a fine.

THE CRITICAL META-ANALYSIS (ERKE 2009)

Overall crashes **up ~15%**; rear-end collisions **up ~40%**; right-angle crashes down ~10% (effects non-significant). Conclusion: "on the whole RLCs do not seem to be a successful safety measure."

THE PRO-CAMERA REBUTTAL (FHWA 2005)

Right-angle crashes **down ~25%**, rear-end **up ~15%**, but a net **+\$18.5M** economic benefit because the crashes prevented are more severe than the ones caused. Both sides agree on the trade-off — they disagree on the net.

A separate 2018 meta-analysis: overall crashes -12%, right-angle -24%, but **rear-end +32%**. The honest summary: red-light cameras *shift* the crash mix; whether that's a net win depends on the intersection — and the cleaner the statistics, the smaller the claimed benefit.

Sources: [Erke 2009](#); [FHWA red-light camera evaluation \(2005\)](#); [Accident Analysis & Prevention \(2018\)](#).

The evaluators who mark their own homework

Much of Australia's pro-camera evidence comes from the Monash University Accident Research Centre (MUARC), whose evaluation of Victoria's fixed cameras found casualty-crash reductions of up to 47% on the camera-monitored approach. MUARC argues its estimates were "**not inflated by regression to the mean**," and that's an empirical argument worth taking seriously.

But two things are fair to note: its design is comparison-site regression, *not* the full empirical-Bayes method used to strip out RTM in the UK study above; and MUARC is funded by the road-safety agencies whose programs it evaluates. When the body that certifies the policy is paid by the body that runs it, independence is a reasonable question — not an accusation.

The bottom line

Cameras probably do reduce crashes *where they're properly sited* — average-speed ("section") control looks the strongest of all. The defensible criticism is not "enforcement is useless." It's that (1) the benefit's **size is routinely overstated** by weak, RTM-contaminated studies, (2) red-light cameras **create new crashes** they rarely account for, and (3) the money and the siting — see [The Goldmines](#) — follow revenue, not risk.

Source: [MUARC Report 307](#).

"Speed kills" – the statistic they never publish.

Nobody sensible thinks 160 in a school zone is fine. The trick is how "speed kills" slides from *dangerous speed in the wrong place* to *any speed over an arbitrary line* — because only the second version can be automated and billed.

The number that does the heavy lifting

Authorities say speed is "a factor" in roughly **one in four to one in three** fatal crashes. Victoria's TAC puts it at "**one-in-four (25%)**." But read their own definition:

"Speed, both excessive speed and inappropriate speed for the conditions... was a likely contributing factor in one-in-four fatal crashes."

— **Transport Accident Commission (Victoria)** (<https://www.tac.vic.gov.au/road-safety/staying-safe/speeding>)

That single number is doing three different jobs at once:

- **Illegal high-range speeding** — the reckless outlier everyone agrees is dangerous.
- **"Inappropriate speed for conditions"** — which can be, and often is, *at or below* the posted limit (90 in fog in a 110 zone).
- **Speed as an aggravator** — a crash caused by fatigue, alcohol or failure-to-give-way, where speed only worsened the outcome.

The missing statistic

There is **no published Australian figure** that isolates "crashes caused by a driver exceeding the posted limit on an otherwise safe road" — the precise behaviour that low-level speed cameras target. Governments simply don't report that cut. The absence of that number, while "speed is a factor" is quoted everywhere, is itself the finding.

Note: crash-causation factors are *not* mutually exclusive — one fatal crash can be coded speed + alcohol + fatigue — so the published shares do not sum to 100%.

Sources on the [Sources](#) page.

The limit isn't "the safe speed"

For a century, traffic engineers set limits using the **85th-percentile speed** — the speed at or below which 85% of drivers naturally travel on a road. Set the limit there and you target genuine outliers. Set it well below, and you criminalise the safest, most typical driver — and manufacture a permanent, predictable stream of "offenders."

"85th Percentile Speed means the speed at or below which 85% of all vehicles are observed to travel under free-flowing conditions past a nominated point."

— Main Roads Western Australia, Speed Zoning policy

Under the "Safe System" doctrine, Australian road authorities are steadily **moving away** from anchoring limits to how people actually drive, toward limits based on survivable impact speeds — which in practice means setting many limits *below* the 85th percentile. That may or may not be good safety policy. What it undeniably does is **widen the gap between the legal limit and normal driving** — and every km/h of that gap is billable.

Austrroads' *Guide to Road Safety Part 3: Safe Speed* (2024) reframes limit-setting around the Safe System rather than observed behaviour. The US FHWA has likewise moved (2023 MUTCD) to discourage rigid reliance on the 85th percentile. See [Sources](#).

The tolerance you're not

allowed to know

How far over the limit before you're fined? In most of Australia, that's a secret — and legally, there is no guaranteed buffer at all.

Jurisdiction	Published tolerance
Victoria	2 km/h fixed (tightened from 3 in 2019); 3 km/h or 3% mobile PUBLISHED
NSW	Not published CONFIDENTIAL
Queensland	Not published CONFIDENTIAL
SA, WA, Tas, ACT, NT	Not published CONFIDENTIAL

Only Victoria publishes a figure. Everywhere else, the exact tolerance is treated as operational secret and, in law, **any** amount over the limit is an offence. A system that fines you at 2 km/h over — inside the error margin of many car speedometers — is not targeting danger.

Source: [RACV — Enforcement of road rules in Victoria](#). We deliberately do *not* quote specific km/h figures for the confidential states; nobody publishes them.

"But the research says 5 km/h doubles your risk"

The official case for near-zero tolerance rests almost entirely on one body of work — the Kloeden Adelaide studies. Take it seriously, because it's real. Then read the fine print.

In a 60 km/h zone, the risk of involvement in a casualty crash roughly **doubles for each 5 km/h** above 60 — a car travelling at 65 in a 60 zone has about double the crash risk.

— Kloeden et al., [CR 207](#) (<https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/department/media/publications/cr-207-reanalysis-travelling-speed-and-risk-crash-involvement-adelaide-south-australia-2002>) (BITRE)

The fine print that rarely makes the press release:

- It's a **relative-risk** multiplier, not a count of how many crashes are actually *caused* by 3–5 km/h over on a good road.
- It's a case-control study of **urban 60 km/h zones in Adelaide** (151 crash cases vs 604 controls) — not a universal law of the road.
- Doubling a *small* risk still leaves a small risk. A relative multiplier says nothing on its own about absolute road-toll benefit.

The honest position

Speed matters. The defensible criticism isn't "enforcement does nothing" — it's that the safety benefit of chasing *very small margins* rests on a narrow evidence base, while the revenue benefit is large, immediate and budgeted. When the evidence is thin and the money is thick, ask which one is driving policy.

Slow can be dangerous too – which cuts both ways

The classic **Solomon curve** (1964) found crash risk is U-shaped against traffic flow: vehicles going much *slower* or much *faster* than the surrounding traffic both face elevated risk, with the lowest risk near the median speed. If that's true, then **speed variance** — not raw speed — is a key danger, and a camera that pushes a cluster of drivers to brake below the natural flow can *increase* variance.

In fairness: the low-speed limb of the Solomon curve is the most disputed part of that research (later work by West & Dunn, Kloeden, and Australian data from Fildes et al. challenged it). We flag it as *supported for the high-speed side, contested for the low-speed side* — because a site that only quotes the convenient half of the evidence is doing exactly what we're criticising.

Overview and critiques: [Solomon curve](#) (with primary citations). Full list on [Sources](#).

The grid you didn't vote for.

A fine is a one-off. A movement record is forever. The road-safety brand is the wrapper on a mass automatic-number-plate-recognition and in-cabin-camera network that grew with almost no public debate — and it keeps expanding into things it was never sold as.

Every plate, every pass

16 / second

Number plates a single police ANPR (automatic number plate recognition) unit can read — day or night, both directions, moving or stationary. Fitted to almost the entire NSW Highway Patrol fleet since ~2012.

The key fact about ANPR is architectural: it uses **mass-surveillance capture**. It doesn't only photograph cars on a watchlist — it reads and logs *every* plate that passes, then checks each against police and registration databases. Non-offenders aren't excluded; they're recorded.

ANPR "is a mass surveillance technique and breaches the human right of liberty of movement." The resulting database is "a 'honeypot' that attracts attention from many organisations" and is "impossible to protect against unauthorised access."

— Australian Privacy Foundation (<https://privacy.org.au/policies/anpr/>)

A proposed national system (CrimTrac's NAVR) envisaged retaining **all** ANPR sightings for **five years** — on the order of 70 million sightings a day. Queensland's own parliamentary inquiry had to recommend that data on non-offending vehicles be "cleansed nightly" — which tells you the default was to keep it.

Sources: [Roger Clarke — Australia's ANPR surveillance](#); [Australian Privacy Foundation](#); [Astor Legal — ANPR](#).

The cameras now look inside your car

Mobile-phone detection cameras don't photograph offenders — they photograph *everyone*, then let an AI decide who to keep. NSW's system was designed to check up to **135 million vehicles a year**.

Every front cabin

The cameras "take multiple images of every vehicle passing... as well as images of the front seats" — not just suspected offenders. An AI reviews the lot.

Rolled out nationwide

NSW live 2020 · QLD Nov 2021 · ACT Feb 2023 · VIC Jul 2023 · SA late 2023. What started as one state's trial is now the national default.

Now watching seatbelts too

The same in-cabin AI was extended to seatbelt enforcement — QLD 2021, VIC & Tas 2023, NSW added. One lens, ever-expanding list of things it judges.

"Deleted" — take their word for it

NSW says non-offender images are deleted "typically within an hour" (AI stage) or "within 72 hours" (human review). The safeguard is a policy, not a law you can enforce.

Sources: [NRSPP](#); [Transport & Main Roads QLD](#); [CarExpert](#) (rollout dates).

Function creep, in one timeline

The clearest proof this is surveillance infrastructure first and safety second: watch what happens to "average speed" (point-to-point) cameras in NSW.

When	What happened
2010	Average-speed cameras introduced in NSW — for heavy trucks and buses only , on freight-safety grounds.
2010–2024	The infrastructure to time <i>every</i> vehicle between two points sits there, used only on trucks.
0ct 2024	Government announces a trial extending average-speed enforcement to ordinary cars .
1 Jul 2025	Enforcement of light vehicles begins on the trial sections. The "trucks only" promise is gone.

And the most direct example of repurposing: during the 2020 pandemic, **Victoria Police used ANPR — normally for stolen and unregistered vehicles — to enforce lockdown movement restrictions**, catching drivers outside their permitted postcodes. Data gathered "for road safety" became a tool for something else entirely, "announced unilaterally... with little to no public discussion."

Sources: [NSW Government — average-speed trial](#); [NRMA](#); [Policing Insight \(Vic Police ANPR / COVID\)](#).

Who actually runs the cameras

A surprising amount of the "public safety" network is operated by private companies, several of them foreign-owned. The state issues the fine; the contractor captures and processes the images.

Operator	Role
Acusensus	NSW mobile phone & seatbelt detection cameras (program reported ~\$88m)
Redflex (now US-owned Verra Mobility)	NSW mobile speed cameras since 2010; acquired by Verra Mobility in 2021
Serco	Victoria's traffic camera operation (contract reported ~\$90m)
SenSen Networks	AI average-speed enforcement cameras, NSW

Operator	Role
Jenoptik	400+ traffic-safety systems supplied across Australia over 20+ years

Follow the incentive

Globally, some camera contracts historically paid the operator a **share of every fine** (reportedly 40–50% under older Redflex-style models), while others pay a flat fee explicitly "to remove incentives to over-issue violations." **We can't confirm which model each Australian contract uses** — the contracts aren't public. That opacity, on a system that fines millions of people, is itself the story. It's a prime candidate for a Freedom-of-Information request.

Sources: [iNews \(Acusensus\)](#); [Serco](#); [Redflex/Verra Mobility](#). Payment-model figures are from international reporting, *not* confirmed Australian contract terms — see [Sources](#).

Your licence photo is now a face-print

The photo you gave for a driver's licence has quietly become biometric infrastructure. Under the **National Driver Licence Facial Recognition Solution (NDLFRS)**, agreed by leaders in 2017, states upload licence images to a central system that builds facial-recognition templates — Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia had already loaded roughly **6 million licences** by 2019.

The first attempt to legislate broad access, the Identity-matching Services Bill 2019, was **rejected by a bipartisan parliamentary committee** on privacy grounds. A scaled-back law took effect at the end of 2024, largely prohibiting "one-to-many" face matching. But the trajectory is clear — and in June 2026 **WA Police deployed live facial recognition in public spaces**, described as an Australian first, scanning the faces of passers-by from a van. Civil liberties group EFA called it "the cherry sitting on top of the surveillance state cake."

Sources: [iNews \(NDLFRS uploads\)](#); [iNews \(2024 law\)](#); [Electronic Frontiers Australia \(WA live facial recognition\)](#).

They already know where you drove

Toll roads are a second movement-tracking layer. Transurban/Linkt's privacy policy confirms it discloses personal information to police and law-enforcement agencies "as required or permitted by law." And it's routine, at scale: documents tabled in NSW Parliament show law-enforcement requests to NSW toll agencies where **toll movement data formed all or part of the information rose from 157 (last four months of 2012) to 996 in 2013** — a roughly six-fold jump in a single year.

Sources: [Transurban privacy policy](#); [NSW Parliament \(toll-data law-enforcement requests\)](#).

Your own car is the next informant

The newest frontier is the vehicle itself. In the EU, **Intelligent Speed Assistance** became mandatory on all new cars from July 2024 — technology that knows the limit and your speed at every moment. And connected cars are already a monetised surveillance feed: in the US, regulators found **General Motors collected drivers' precise location "as often as every 3 seconds"** plus hard-braking and speeding data, and **sold it to data brokers** who fed it to insurers. California imposed a \$12.75 million penalty. The same data that enables "safety" features is the data that builds a permanent behavioural record — and it can be sold, subpoenaed, or leaked.

Sources: [ETSC \(EU ISA mandate\)](#); [US FTC \(GM/OnStar\)](#). GM/ISA examples are international, included as the trajectory Australia is following.

And then the database leaks

Every "trust us, it's secure" assurance runs into the record. The **2020 Service NSW breach** exposed 3.8 million documents — including driver licences and other ID — affecting ~104,000 people. Separately, **over 54,000 scanned NSW driver licences** were found sitting in an open, misconfigured cloud bucket. And the databases that ingest ANPR and licence data are repeatedly abused from the inside: **178 Victoria Police officers** faced complaints over misuse of the LEAP database in one five-year window, and NSW officers have been prosecuted in 2026 for illegally accessing the COPS system (which holds 40+ million records). A honeypot this large cannot be kept safe — from outsiders or insiders.

Sources: [Service NSW cyber incident](#); [OAIC \(54,000 licences\)](#); [IBAC \(LEAP misuse\)](#); [NSW COPS prosecutions \(2026\)](#).

Where the images go

For in-cabin cameras, NSW publishes a retention policy (non-offender images deleted within ~1–72 hours). For **ANPR there is no consistent, published rule** across states — retention ranges from "cleanse nightly" (a Queensland recommendation) to a proposed **five years** nationally, with Victoria's regime described by civil-liberties analysts as effectively unregulated: "it is unclear what records Victoria Police generate, keep, and/or cross-reference, nor how long data is kept."

"Nothing to hide" was never the test for whether the state gets to keep a movement history on millions of people who were never accused of anything.

Full citations on the [Sources](#) page.

A camera inside every car.

Speed cameras watch the road. This newer generation watches *you* — photographing the front cabin of every vehicle that passes and running the image through AI to look for a phone in your hand or a seatbelt off your shoulder. Australia was the **world's first** to deploy them. They are being bolted, one offence at a time, onto a network that scans everyone.

What it actually does

NSW switched on the world's first mobile-phone detection cameras in a trial from **December 2019**, with fines from **1 March 2020**. Each camera photographs *every* vehicle — capturing the number plate and a high-definition image of the front seats — and an algorithm flags the ones it thinks show an offence. By the state's own account the NSW network is scaled to check on the order of **135 million vehicles a year**.

"The cameras take multiple images of every vehicle that passes... Images where no offence is detected are automatically excluded and deleted."

— Queensland Government, road-safety camera page

That is the reassurance: the machine looks at everyone, but only "keeps" the guilty. The catch is that *you* can't audit it — you never see the images that were taken and deleted, and no government publishes how often the AI gets it wrong ([see below](#)).

\$423

The standard NSW mobile-phone fine (\$562 in a school zone), plus **5 demerit points** — 10 in a double-demerit period. In **2022–23** the NSW cameras issued **208,600+** phone fines worth **\$67.3 million**, all funnelled to the Community Road Safety Fund. REPORTED

Sources: [Transport for NSW](#); [NRSP](#); [Queensland Government](#); fine and revenue figures via [NRMA](#).

From one state to the whole country

What began as a NSW experiment is now a near-national grid, mostly built on the same Australian technology (Acusensus). Note the pattern: almost every state added **seatbelt detection** to the same hardware within a couple of years — the infrastructure sold to stop texting quietly grew a second job.

Jurisdiction	Fines from	Phone fine	Seatbelt AI?
NSW	Mar 2020	\$423	Yes — Jul 2024
QLD	Nov 2021	\$1,209*	Yes — from launch
VIC	Jul 2023	~\$556	Yes — from launch
WA	2024	up to \$1,000	Yes
SA	Sep 2024	\$556 + levy	Rolling out
ACT	Feb 2024	\$514–\$674	Yes — Nov 2025
TAS	Trial phase	\$410	Not at scale

Dates and amounts vary by financial year and use-type; several are indexed annually. QLD runs the country's harshest penalty (*fine amount rises each July). REPORTED — Sources: [CarExpert \(state-by-state\)](#); [QLD Government](#); [Victorian Government](#). Tasmania details are thin and are flagged CONTESTED.

The go-live spike

If these cameras were purely a deterrent, switching them on would be uneventful. Instead, every "go live" is a revenue event — and the clearest proof is what happens during the *warning* period, when the machine counts offences it isn't yet fining.

Jurisdiction	Warning period	What it recorded
WA	8 months, no fines	380,000+ breaches
SA	~3 months	64,454 warnings
QLD	~3 months	21,599 warnings
NSW (seatbelt)	none	11,400 fines / 21 days

NSW gave seatbelt detection **no grace period at all**. In the first **21 days** it issued over **11,400 penalties** — about **75% for wearing a belt *incorrectly*** (still the full \$410 fine and 3 points) — and in three weeks detected more seatbelt offences than *the entire NSW Police force* issued in all of 2023. WA's cameras, meanwhile, quietly logged **380,000+** breaches during an 8-month grace window before a single fine was posted. The "safety warning" period is really a demonstration of the revenue pipeline about to be switched on.

Sources: [Transport for NSW media release \(4 Aug 2024, PDF\)](#); WA/SA/QLD warning-period figures via [CarExpert](#) and state media releases. VERIFIED (NSW) · REPORTED (WA/SA/QLD).

The accountability you're not allowed to see

A system that photographs the inside of every car, decides guilt by algorithm, and reverses the burden of proof onto you ought to be the most transparent machine in the state. It is one of the least.

- ✗ **No published error rate — anywhere.** Not one Australian jurisdiction publishes the AI's false-positive rate or how often fines are withdrawn on appeal. You are told the system is accurate; you cannot check it.
- ✗ **The ethics check that wasn't done.** The **Queensland Audit Office** found in **September 2025** that the phone-and-seatbelt camera program had not completed the ethical risk assessment required under the state's own AI Ethics Framework — meaning "potential ethical dangers remain unidentified and unmanaged" — even as it issued roughly 114,000 fines in a year.

✗ **Guilty until you prove otherwise.** Under owner-onus law the driver must prove the object in their hand was not a phone — a reverse burden the NSW Council for Civil Liberties warned about before the scheme even began.

✗ **Wrong for half a year.** A Canberra couple spent **190+ days** fighting a seatbelt fine before Access Canberra admitted it was "issued to you incorrectly" — a "technical error" it never explained.

"There is a lack of any clear proposals... as to how the captured data may be used, accessed, stored or when it will be deleted."

— NSW Council for Civil Liberties, on the detection-camera bill (2019)

Sources: [iNews — Queensland Audit Office finding \(26 Sep 2025\)](#); [NSW Council for Civil Liberties \(15 Nov 2019\)](#); ACT wrongful-fine case via Canberra reporting (2026).

VERIFIED (QLD audit, NSWCCCL).

The same hardware, more and more jobs

The honest way to see this technology is as a general-purpose *cabin and plate scanner* that happens to have started with phones. The same Acusensus units already read number plates to catch unregistered and speeding vehicles; seatbelts were added by software; average-speed timing rides on the same poles. Each new offence is a small, reasonable-sounding extension — and each one normalises a camera pointed inside your car.

SOLD AS

A narrow tool to stop people texting at the wheel — "if you've done nothing wrong, you've nothing to fear."

ACTUALLY

A multi-function scanner — phone, seatbelt, registration, speed — photographing every cabin, run by **private operators** on contracts worth tens of millions (NSW ~\$88m; QLD signed a \$27.4m extension in Dec 2024), with the images you never see.

What we're not claiming

We have found no confirmed case of these cabin images being handed to police for an unrelated investigation — the function creep so far is *offence-type* expansion, not cross-agency data use. And there is no reliable public "total revenue since 2020" figure, so we quote only the per-year numbers governments have released. The point isn't a single scandal; it's that a watch-everyone camera has been built with almost none of the transparency that watching everyone should require. See the receipts on [Sources](#).

Sources: [iTnews — TfNSW/Acusensus contract](#); QLD extension via state procurement reporting (Dec 2024). Cross-references: [Surveillance — the grid](#), [Faults & Errors](#).

Who really runs the cameras.

"Public safety" cameras are largely operated by private companies on contracts worth hundreds of millions of dollars — contracts you can't read. One of them, the firm that runs NSW speed cameras, was at the centre of a bribery scandal that sent people to federal prison.

The company that runs NSW cameras went to prison in Chicago

Redflex Traffic Systems — founded in Australia, headquartered in South Melbourne — has operated NSW mobile speed cameras since 2010. In the United States, Redflex was the vendor at the heart of one of the biggest municipal corruption cases in Chicago's history.

Who	What happened
John Bills — Chicago transport official	Took up to \$2 million in cash, a Mercedes and an Arizona condo to steer a red-light contract worth ~\$124 million to Redflex. Convicted on all 20 counts; sentenced to 10 years in federal prison (2016).
Karen Finley — Redflex CEO	Pleaded guilty; sentenced to 30 months in prison and \$2M restitution (plus a separate 14-month term for an Ohio scheme).
Redflex (company)	Chicago severed ties; the city settled its lawsuit for \$20 million . Redflex's stock collapsed (to A\$0.17 by 2015) and it posted years of losses.

In 2021 Redflex was acquired by the US firm **Verra Mobility** for ~A\$152 million. Verra's automated-enforcement ("Government Solutions") business earned roughly **US\$460 million** in 2025. This is the corporate lineage sitting behind a chunk of Australia's "road safety" network.

Sources: [US DOJ](#); [ABC7 \(Bills, 10 years\)](#); [CBS \(Finley\)](#); [NBC \(settlement\)](#); [Verra Mobility](#).

All US except the Australian corporate origin and NSW operation.

The contracts you're not allowed to see

Australian states outsource camera operation to private companies on very large contracts. The dollar totals surface; the actual terms — including how the operators are paid — largely don't.

Operator	Contract
Serco (Victoria)	Traffic camera services — \$178M over six years (2019 rebid), after a \$90M extension in 2014
Acusensus (NSW)	Phone/seatbelt program ~ \$88M ; mobile-speed extension ~ \$16M per six months
Redflex / Verra Mobility (NSW)	Mobile speed cameras since 2010 (reported ~\$112M program)
Jenoptik (WA, VIC)	81 speed + red-light systems in WA (~A\$28M); Victorian distracted-driver cameras (~€10M)

The incentive problem. Overseas, some camera contracts historically paid the operator *a cut of every fine* — reportedly 40–50% under older Redflex-style deals. Maryland banned per-ticket payments outright, with legislators calling them "a form of kickback" that creates "a financial incentive for contractors to cheat to maximise profits."

Credit where due — then the catch

To be fair: NSW states its mobile-speed operators are paid **per hour of enforcement, not per fine**, specifically to remove that incentive. That's the right model. The catch is that the actual contract terms are not public, so nobody outside government can verify what the incentives really are. On a system that fines millions of people, that opacity is itself the story — and a prime candidate for a Freedom-of-Information request.

Sources: [Serco](#); [Acusensus \(ASX\)](#); [Jenoptik](#); [CBS \(Maryland per-ticket ban\)](#). Payment-model percentages are from international reporting, not confirmed Australian contract terms.

The oldest trick: shorten the yellow light

Red-light cameras earn most when more people run reds. The fastest way to make that happen isn't reckless drivers — it's a shorter amber. Overseas, that's exactly what happened.

- **Florida, 2011:** the state transport department quietly cut the minimum yellow interval below the federal recommendation. A half-second reduction can roughly **double** red-light-camera citations. At one Oldsmar intersection the yellow was 3.0s instead of the ~4.3s the standard called for; after it was corrected, citations dropped ~90% — **with no refunds**.
- **Chicago:** the city issued tickets at **2.9 seconds** — 0.1s below the federal minimum — a practice the previous vendor had refused to implement. ~77,000 motorists were caught.
- **Georgia, 2009:** a state law forced a **+1-second** increase in yellow at every camera intersection. Violations fell ~80%. Once the cameras stopped being profitable, cities **switched them off**.

And the engineering research is unambiguous: **lengthening the amber cuts red-light running more than the camera does**. A Texas study found a 1-second increase cut violations by at least ~50%. In Philadelphia, adding a second of amber cut violations 36% *before any camera was installed*. The cheap, un-billable fix works — which is precisely why it's rarely the first resort.

Sources: [Slate \(Florida\)](#); [Chicago 2.9s](#); [Georgia HB 77](#); [Texas TTI study](#); [IIHS \(Philadelphia\)](#). All international — no equivalent state-sanctioned amber-shortening scandal is documented in Australia, but AU's combined red-light-and-speed cameras issue two fines from one pass.

The infallible machine that isn't.

Camera fines arrive with the authority of a machine that "doesn't lie." But cameras have been hacked, mis-calibrated, and caught fining cars for speeds they can't physically reach — and the burden of proving the error is dumped on you.

When ransomware hit the cameras

In June 2017 the **WannaCry ransomware** infected Victoria's fixed road-safety camera network after a maintenance contractor plugged in an infected USB stick.

Detail	Figure
Camera devices infected	110 (43 Redflex + 67 Jenoptik)
Cameras potentially exposed	up to 280
Fines suspended as a precaution	~8,000
Fines withdrawn	1,643
Fines embargoed pending review	5,500

Authorities said there was no evidence the ransomware had altered any fine's accuracy — the tickets were cancelled "to preserve public confidence." Which rather concedes the point: public confidence in automated fines rests on the assumption the system is clean, and that assumption had just been broken.

Sources: [iNews](#); [Global News](#); Victorian Road Safety Camera Commissioner report, *WannaCry malware infection* (2018).

Nearly 19,000 wrong fines – in one state, in three years

- **NSW, Jul 2007 – May 2010:** the state refunded **18,944** inaccurate or illegally issued camera tickets worth **\$3.79 million**, across **148 separate incidents**. One location alone (King Georges Road, Beverly Hills) accounted for 5,279 tickets and ~\$888,000.
- **Victoria, 2004–2006:** authorities **secretly deactivated** cameras they knew were faulty and admitted 1,130 motorists were falsely accused. The West Gate Bridge cameras were quietly disabled after 4,243 citations — the assistant commissioner: "if we can't be absolutely sure, let's not infringe."
- **The impossible speed:** a Victorian camera clocked a **1975 Datsun 120Y at 98 mph** — a car whose top speed was about 73 mph — blamed on faulty in-ground sensors. Officials initially insisted on the fine.

Sources: [NSW refunds \(documents released by the then-Opposition\)](#); [Victoria faulty cameras / Datsun / West Gate](#). Some single-outlet specifics are reported figures; treat exact totals as "as reported."

The machine is not conclusive – a court said so

In *RTA of NSW v Mitchell (2006)*, the NSW Supreme Court dismissed the roads authority's appeal against an acquittal. The camera image lacked a legally required security indicator (proof the image wasn't altered), and Justice Adams held this could ground reasonable doubt *even with no contrary evidence from the driver*.

Computer processes "can go awry," and a "tribunal of fact is still bound ... to consider the quality of that evidence."

– Adams J, *RTA of NSW v Mitchell (2006)*

In other words, a camera certificate is evidence — not automatic guilt. But most people never test that, because of how the system is built (see below, and [The Law](#)).

The AI that "sees" a phone – and sometimes a sandwich

Mobile-phone detection cameras use AI to flag drivers, with a human reviewing before a fine issues. Reported grounds for successful challenges include a phone sitting untouched, a reflection or object misread as a phone, adjusting the air vents — even a hand near the face. The vendor's "95% capture" figure is a *design target*, not an independently verified false-positive rate.

The transparency hole

Here's what's genuinely damning: **no Australian authority publishes a false-positive rate or the proportion of contested camera fines that get withdrawn.** NSW even hosts a dataset on fine reviews and waivers — but the headline error rate isn't advertised. Combined with owner-onus (you're presumed liable and must actively contest), the rational move for most people is to just pay. A system that profits from people *not* checking its accuracy has little reason to publish it.

Sources: NSW review/waiver data — data.nsw.gov.au; [AAP FactCheck \(enhanced images admissible\)](#). No official false-positive rate exists in public sources — a prime FOI/GIPA target.

A tax on being poor.

A flat fine is a mosquito bite for the wealthy and a catastrophe for everyone else. And when it can't be paid, the machine escalates — costs, licence loss, seizure, and, until recently, prison. This is where "road safety" collides with justice.

Same fine, wildly different pain

A NSW fine for going 10–19 km/h over the limit is a flat **\$361** — whether you're on a pension or a seven-figure salary.

"While they are basically a mosquito bite for the wealthy, they can be earth-shattering for the poor... Australia's regressive speeding fine system effectively criminalises poverty."

— The Australia Institute, **Refining Fines** (<https://australiainstitute.org.au/report/refining-fines/>) (2024)

For someone on \$50,000 a year, \$361 is more than a third of a week's pay; for someone on \$200,000 it's covered "by lunchtime on Monday." Several European countries use income-based "day fines" so the sting is proportionate. Australia doesn't.

Source: **The Australia Institute**.

The pipeline: fine → licence → job → jail

An unpaid fine doesn't stay a fine. It escalates, administratively, with new costs at each step — and it takes the things people need to earn a living.

Step	What happens
1. Overdue	Enforcement costs added — up to \$65 each time an action is taken
2. Sanction	Driver licence and/or vehicle registration suspended — even for non-driving fines (Vic)
3. Recovery	Sheriff seizure of goods, wage/bank garnishee, charge over land
4. (Historically) Prison	Warrant of commitment — imprisonment for fine default

up to 67%

of NSW driver-licence suspensions stem from **fine enforcement** — **not dangerous driving**. Unpaid fines in NSW have reached around **\$1 billion**, owed by 380,000+ individuals.

Losing a licence over an unpaid fine means losing the ability to get to work — especially in regional and remote areas with no public transport — which pushes people into driving while suspended, which is itself a crime. "What starts as a social justice issue," one government submission put it, "often becomes a criminal justice issue."

Sources: [Legal Aid NSW](#); [ALRC Report 133, ch.12](#); Redfern Legal Centre.

Ms Dhu – and who bears the burden

In 2014, **Ms Dhu**, a 22-year-old Yamatji woman, was locked up in South Hedland, WA, over **\$3,622 in unpaid fines**. She died in custody less than 48 hours later. The Coroner found her treatment "unprofessional and inhumane," and that staff had been influenced by "preconceived ideas about Aboriginal people."

Her death was not an isolated glitch. Between 2006 and 2015, **7,462 people were imprisoned for fine default in WA** — roughly 11 a day. The burden fell overwhelmingly on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people:

- **64%** of women imprisoned for fine default in WA were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander — the fastest-growing group in the prison system.

- Nationally, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were **33%** of all prisoners jailed for traffic/vehicle regulatory offences — and **100%** in the Northern Territory.

WA **abolished imprisonment for fine default on 20 June 2020**, and introduced a Custody Notification Service — reforms that came only after Ms Dhu's death and years of campaigning.

Sources: [WA Coroner — Inquest into the death of Ms Dhu](#); [ALRC Report 133](#). Handled as a matter of public record.

The system admits the harm — quietly

NSW runs a **Work and Development Order** scheme letting vulnerable people clear fines through treatment, counselling, courses or volunteering instead of money. It has helped more than **87,000 people clear over \$200 million** in debt. Every hardship scheme like it is a tacit admission that the flat-fine model does real damage to people who can't pay — damage the "road safety" framing never mentions.

The honest ask

None of this argues for lawless roads. It argues that if the purpose were safety rather than revenue, the penalty would be **proportionate to the risk and to the person** — not a flat charge that a millionaire ignores and a single parent goes to court over. A speed camera can't tell the difference between the two. The budget papers can.

Source: [Legal Aid NSW — Work and Development Orders](#).

Presence, not impairment.

Random breath testing measures whether you're *impaired* — there's a legal 0.05 line. Roadside drug testing measures only whether a substance is *present*, with no impairment threshold at all. You can be stone-cold sober and still be guilty.

The core switch

NSW Mobile Drug Testing (MDT) checks saliva for THC (cannabis), methamphetamine, cocaine and MDMA. It does not, and cannot, measure impairment.

"Roadside drug testing focuses on detection rather than impairment. This means you can be charged when certain drugs are present in your system, **even if you don't feel intoxicated.**"

— Alcohol and Drug Foundation

ALCOHOL (RBT)

Impairment-based. A measured legal threshold (**0.05** BAC). You can legally drive after a drink. ~6 million tests a year.

ILLICIT DRUGS (MDT)

Presence-based. **No threshold** — any detectable trace is an offence. The prosecution "does not need to prove that the person was driving impaired."

Two opposite philosophies, in the same road-safety statute.

Sources: [Alcohol and Drug Foundation](#); [NUAA](#); [Harm Reduction Australia](#), [Drive Change NSW \(2025\)](#).

The drug is gone. The trace isn't.

Cannabis impairment lasts a few hours. THC stays *detectable* far longer — the Alcohol and Drug Foundation says saliva tests can pick it up for **up to 3 days**, and urine for around a month. So the test routinely catches people long after any effect has passed.

"THC levels in saliva do not reliably reflect cannabis intake or intoxication."

– Prof. Iain McGregor, University of Sydney

The emblematic case: **Joseph Carrall** tested positive **nine days** after last using cannabis — after a police officer had told him "a week clear was fine." A magistrate acquitted him on the defence of honest and reasonable mistake of fact. Then, in **February 2025**, the NSW Court of Criminal Appeal confirmed drug-driving is an **absolute liability offence** — abolishing that defence entirely.

"It doesn't matter how you came to have the drug detected... you are liable. It's made a bad situation even worse. At least there was a defence in some circumstances. Now, there is no defence."

– David Heilpern, former NSW magistrate

Sources: [University of Sydney](#); [Sydney Criminal Lawyers \(absolute liability ruling\)](#).

And the tests get it wrong

A University of Sydney study tested the two roadside devices Australian police use and found significant error rates in both:

Device	False negatives	False positives
Securetec DrugWipe	9%	5%
Dräger DrugTest 5000	16%	10%

The lead researcher: results "often came back positive when they should have been negative, or... negative when they should have actually been positive." These devices "were never designed to measure impairment."

Source: [University of Sydney, Lambert Initiative](#) (published in *Drug Testing and Analysis*).

Punishing patients – and an enforcement machine that grows itself

Legal, prescribed medicinal-cannabis patients commit the presence offence if they drive with any detectable THC — even wholly unimpaired, using their medicine exactly as directed. Tasmania is the only state with a medical defence; Victoria is running a **\$4.9M closed-track trial** to test whether unimpaired patients can drive safely, and NSW is introducing a limited scheme.

+836%

Rise in NSW drug-driving charges from 2014 to 2023, as testing scaled from ~20,000 to ~156,000 a year. Crucially, the state's own crime-statistics bureau found "**no evidence** that recent trends... are driven by changes in drug use or drug-driving behaviours" — the surge is an enforcement artefact, achieved by targeting.

Two more red flags

Regional NSW is drug-tested at roughly **twice** the state rate. And the **per-test cost to taxpayers is not publicly disclosed** — the very transparency that harm-reduction groups are demanding. A presence-based regime, wrong up to 1-in-6 times, with no defence, expanding by targeting, at an undisclosed cost: that is a lot of machine for very little demonstrated impairment.

Sources: [BOCSAR \(charges & testing trends\)](#); [Premier of Victoria \(trial\)](#); [NSW Government \(reform\)](#). Some figures (per-test cost, "only jurisdiction in the world") are flagged by their sources as needing confirmation and are treated cautiously here.

Where they switched them off.

Australia treats camera enforcement as settled and expanding. Elsewhere, towns switched cameras off with no rise in deaths, voters banned them at the ballot box, and whole states outlawed them on due-process grounds. The evidence is more contested than the press releases admit.

The town that turned them off – and the toll fell

In 2009, **Swindon** became the first UK council to switch off its fixed speed cameras. The predicted carnage didn't come:

Swindon, first 9 months after switch-off	Before	After
Total road casualties	327	315
Fatalities	4	2
Serious injuries	48	44

Casualties fell slightly. Somerset later reported a similar "no worse without them" result.

Source: [road.cc](#) ([Swindon figures](#)). International.

The honest counter-example

We're not going to cherry-pick. When **Oxfordshire** switched off all its cameras in 2010 (after a budget cut), deaths in the affected period rose from 12 to 18, and it switched them back on eight months later. In **France**, after "yellow vest" protesters destroyed a huge share of the camera network, the road-safety agency linked a **17% rise in road deaths** in February 2019 (with the usual caveat that other factors were in play).

So what's the truth?

The international evidence is **genuinely mixed** — Swindon and Somerset saw no rise; Oxfordshire and France did. That's exactly the point: "cameras unambiguously save lives" is not what the natural experiments show. The effect depends heavily on the site — which is why *where* you put them (see [The Goldmines](#)) matters more than *how many*.

Sources: [BBC \(Oxfordshire\)](#); [CNN \(France\)](#).

Americans voted them out

Where US voters got a direct say, they overwhelmingly rejected automated enforcement — often explicitly as a revenue-and-due-process grievance.

Place	Vote
Houston, TX (2010)	Banned red-light cameras, 52.8%
Anaheim, CA (2010)	Banned, 73%
Cleveland, OH (2014)	Banned by roughly 3-to-1
Nov 2011 ballot sweep	7 of 8 cities rejected cameras

And it went statewide: **Texas banned red-light cameras** in 2019, the bill's author citing due process — "the right to due process matters." Several states (Maine, Mississippi, New Hampshire, South Carolina, West Virginia and others) ban speed and/or red-light cameras outright. **Arizona** killed its statewide freeway speed-camera program in 2010 after it missed revenue targets and roughly two-thirds of recipients simply ignored the citations.

Sources: [Texas Tribune](#); [Ballotpedia](#); [Arizona program](#). International; the US state-ban list should be checked against each state's statute.

When cameras fund

themselves, the mask slips

Britain's cameras used to run on "netting off" — partnerships kept their operating costs directly out of the fines. The government ended it in 2005–2007 because it was "too politically sensitive": it too openly tied camera operation to the money the fines produced. The result was telling — once cameras had to be funded from general budgets, the 2010 budget cuts led councils to switch them off. Cameras that were about safety would have been protected; cameras that were about revenue lost their reason to exist the moment they stopped paying for themselves.

This is the cautionary tale for Australia's hypothecated "road safety funds" (see [The Money](#)): the moment a safety budget *depends* on fine income, the system needs the fines to keep flowing.

Source: [Road Safety GB — National Safety Camera Programme history](#).

And when they can't vote, they revolt

In Italy, a masked vigilante nicknamed "**Fleximan**" cut down 15+ speed cameras with an angle grinder, becoming a folk hero online. In France, the "yellow vest" movement damaged **60–75% of the country's speed cameras**, at a cost to the state of €660 million. You don't get that level of public anger at a measure people believe is really about saving their lives.

Sources: [BBC \(Fleximan\)](#); [The Local \(France\)](#). International — reported as evidence of public sentiment, not endorsement of vandalism.

PART · BY STATE

The racket, jurisdiction by jurisdiction.

Eight governments, one pattern. Only one publishes its speed tolerance. Some ring-fence the money then don't spend it; others tip it straight into consolidated revenue. And the territory with the lightest camera footprint has the worst road toll in the country.

The comparison

Jurisdiction	Tolerance published?	Latest camera/fine revenue	Where the money goes
NSW	No — most secretive	~\$275M (hist.); fell after signs returned	Community Road Safety Fund — ~\$104M underspent
VIC	Yes — 2 km/h fixed / 3 km/h mobile	\$473M (2023-24)	Better Roads Victoria Trust — but cameras run covert/unsigned
QLD	No	\$464M gross, ~\$337M net (2023-24)	Hypothecated (TORUM Act); majority from lowest-level fines
SA	No	608,794 speed fines (2023-24)	Community Road Safety Fund
WA	No	\$127M into RTTA (2022-23)	Road Trauma Trust Account — ~\$120M sat unspent
TAS	No	\$9.5M mobile cameras (to Oct 2024)	Consolidated — no dedicated fund (its own advisers want one)

Jurisdiction	Tolerance published?	Latest camera/fine revenue	Where the money goes
ACT	No	~\$51M (2023-24) → ~\$104M (2025-26)	Consolidated — no fund at all
NT	No	Not separately published	Consolidated — lightest enforcement, worst toll

Sources on the [Sources](#) page. Only Victoria officially publishes its tolerance; every other jurisdiction keeps it confidential, arguing disclosure would create a de-facto higher limit. Demerit suspension is 12 points (13 in NSW).

The one damning fact per jurisdiction

NSW

Its "Community Road Safety Fund" has been **underspent every year since 2019-20** — a ~\$104M shortfall. A safety fund that isn't spent on safety is just a tax with a nicer name.

Victoria

The only state honest enough to **publish its 2 km/h tolerance** — and the one that runs its mobile cameras **hidden and unsigned**, "anywhere, anytime."

Queensland

More than half its speeding revenue comes from the **lowest-level** speeding band — the smallest overages, not the dangerous outliers.

South Australia

Ran a formal independent **Speed Camera Audit** of its own siting — an admission the question of "safety vs revenue" is live.

WA

The Auditor-General found **~\$120M sitting unspent** in the Road Trauma Trust Account, weak ministerial-approval records, and decade-long unevaluated projects.

Tasmania

Camera revenue goes to **consolidated revenue** — and the chair of the state's own Road Safety Advisory Council has publicly demanded it be ring-fenced.

ACT

A single mobile-phone camera gantry earns ~\$1 million a month; fine revenue is set to **double by 2026** — all into consolidated revenue, no road-safety fund.

NT

The outlier that breaks the spell: **no phone cameras, no point-to-point cameras** — and the **highest road-death rate in the country**. If cameras were the answer, the NT would be safest.

Sources: NSW & WA Auditor-General; QLD/VIC/SA/TAS/ACT/NT government & reporting — full list on [Sources](#).

The tell across all eight

Read the table as a whole and the pattern is unmistakable. The jurisdictions "ring-fence" the money into road-safety funds — then leave tens or hundreds of millions **unspent** (NSW, WA). The ones that don't bother ring-fencing tip it into **consolidated revenue** and forecast it to grow (ACT). Only one publishes how it enforces (VIC) — and hides the cameras anyway. And the single place with almost no automated enforcement (NT) has the worst toll — which means the deaths are about roads, distances and infrastructure, not about whether a camera caught you 3 km/h over in a city.

PART · RIGHT TO DRIVE?

How mobility became a "privilege."

"Driving is a privilege, not a right" is repeated like a law of nature. It isn't. It's a 20th-century invention — a political choice made barely a lifetime ago. Here's the honest history, the actual law, and why the "privilege" framing is a choice we're allowed to question.

You never needed a licence to ride a horse

For all of human history until about 1906, people moved freely — on foot, by horse, by bicycle — with **no licence, no registration, no test, no plate**. Then the car arrived, and governments built an entirely new bureaucracy around it.

When	What was invented
1906	South Australia issues Australia's first driver's licence and introduces car registration
1909–10	Victoria's Motor Car Act 1909 and NSW's Motor Traffic Act 1909 create the offences of driving without a licence and driving an unregistered vehicle; first number plates issued
early years	The first licences were just a fee and an application — <i>no driving test</i> . Competency testing was bolted on later, piecemeal, over following decades

Horse riders were never licensed. Cyclists, by and large, never were. The licence was created *specifically for the motor car* and then steadily expanded into the fee-points-fines-and- suspension apparatus we have now. The state didn't discover that driving was a privilege — it **manufactured** the category.

Sources: [SA 1906 \(first licence & registration\)](#); [Tranter, "The History of the Haste-Wagons: the Motor Car Act 1909 \(Vic\)" \(Melb Univ Law Review\)](#); [NSW Motor Traffic Act 1909 / first plates 1910](#).

What the Constitution actually says

Section 92 of the Australian Constitution declares that "trade, commerce, and **intercourse among the States... shall be absolutely free.**" Australians *do* have a real, court-recognised freedom to move **across State borders** — it's why wartime and ex-prisoner travel bans were struck down.

WHAT S92 GENUINELY PROTECTS

Free movement of people and goods **between** states, without protectionist burdens. Confirmed in *R v Smithers* (1912) and *Gratwick v Johnson* (1945): people are "free to pass to and fro among the States without burden, hindrance or restriction."

WHAT IT DOESN'T DO

It is not a general "right to travel," doesn't cover movement *within* a state, and says nothing about cars or licences. And in *Gerner v Victoria* (2020) the High Court unanimously held there is **no implied constitutional freedom of movement** at all.

So here's the honest bottom line, and we won't pretend otherwise: **as the law currently stands, driving is a regulated privilege, and licensing laws are valid.** The popular "I'm travelling, not driving, so I need no licence" argument has been run in Australian courts many times and **loses every single time** — the NSW Judicial Commission records no case of it ever succeeding. Anyone who tells you otherwise is selling a courtroom disaster.

A warning, because we're honest

"Sovereign citizen" / "freeman" tactics — refusing to give your name, claiming a licence is a contract you can decline, invoking s92 to drive unregistered — are **not valid law** and have a **0% success rate** in Australian courts. They get people convicted, fined and occasionally jailed for contempt. This page is a political and historical argument, not legal advice, and definitely not that.

Sources: [Section 92](#); [Gerner v Victoria \[2020\] HCA 48](#); [NSW Judicial Commission \(pseudolaw never succeeds\)](#).

So why does "privilege not a right" matter?

Because a "privilege" can be conditioned on anything, revoked at will, and priced however the state likes. Calling mobility a privilege is what makes the whole machine in this exposé possible.

- **It's the master switch.** Once driving is a privilege, your everyday mobility can be suspended for an *unpaid fine* that has nothing to do with driving competence (see [Punishing the Poor](#)) — no court, no crime, just an administrative lever.
- **It normalises the surveillance.** A "privilege" comes with conditions you're told you accepted: your face in a national database, your plate read 16 times a second, your movements logged "for road safety" (see [Surveillance](#)).
- **It licenses endless pricing.** A privilege can carry fees, demerit schemes, indexed fines and tolls that only ever rise — because you can always be told the alternative is not driving at all.

In much of the country a car is not a luxury — it's the only way to reach work, school, a doctor. Treating that as a revocable favour from the state, rather than a basic freedom to be regulated proportionately, is a **political choice**. It was made in 1909. It can be questioned in 2026.

The argument worth making

Not the pseudo-legal fantasy — the real one. Australia is unusual: it has **no bill of rights** and, after *Gerner*, **no constitutional protection of freedom of movement** within the country at all. Even the United States, for all its faults, recognises a constitutional "right to travel" (while still upholding sensible licensing). Australians' freedom to move rests almost entirely on ordinary statutes that any parliament can tighten tomorrow.

The legitimate reform case follows from that:

- **Decouple identity and surveillance from the licence** — a competency permit should not be a national ID and movement-tracking token.

- **Limit licence suspension to genuine road-safety grounds** — not fine-default debt collection.
- **Make penalties proportionate** to actual risk and to the person, not flat taxes on mobility.
- **Enshrine a freedom of movement** — precisely because *Gerner* shows we currently have none.

"Privilege, not a right" isn't a fact of nature handed down through the ages. It's a sentence a government wrote — and a citizenry can decide to rewrite.

Sources: [ALRC — Freedom of Movement](#); [US "right to travel" vs driving](#); [Gerner v Victoria \(2020\)](#).

PART 5 · DELEGATIONS

How they got the power – without a vote.

The most important fact about the fine machine is where its rules come from. The dollar amounts, what counts as a "camera," which offences make you guilty-by-default, and how many points cost you your licence are almost all set by *regulation and ministerial instrument* — the executive — not debated and voted by Parliament.

The Acts are just the frame

Each state has an enabling Act. But the Act mostly grants power to a minister or agency; the operative detail is pushed down into delegated legislation and instruments.

State	Enabling Act	Key camera / penalty provisions
NSW	Road Transport Act 2013	s 195 penalty notices · s 183 "approved traffic enforcement device" · s 273 delegation
VIC	Road Safety Act 1986	s 66 operator-onus · s 80 / 83A camera evidence · reg 32 "prescribed road safety cameras"
QLD	Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995	s 114 — person in charge "is taken to have committed" the offence
SA	Road Traffic Act 1961	s 79B — owner "is guilty... unless it is proved" otherwise
WA	Road Traffic (Administration) Act 2008	s 86–87 — "responsible person presumed to be driver"

Section numbers and titles verified via AustLII / state legislation registers; see [Sources](#) for the exact provisions. Always read the current consolidated section before relying on it.

The bits that actually cost you money aren't in the Act

Here's the accountability gap. The things that determine your fine are set by the executive, by instruments most people have never heard of and Parliament rarely debates.

- **The dollar amount.** NSW s 195 makes the penalty "the amount prescribed... by the *statutory rules*" — a regulation, not a line voted by Parliament.
- **Automatic annual increases.** Victorian fines are expressed in "penalty units" whose dollar value is *indexed every year* under the Monetary Units Act 2004 — fines rise each July with no fresh vote.
- **What even counts as a "camera."** Victoria's "prescribed road safety cameras" are defined in *reg 32* of the Road Safety (General) Regulations 2019, not the Act.
- **Which offences make you guilty-by-default.** The list of camera / operator-onus offences is set and expanded by amending regulations (e.g. Vic SR 8/2023).
- **How many demerit points each offence carries.** NSW s 43 — "prescribed by the statutory rules." Not the Act.

Why this matters

When the amount, the trigger, the device definition and the points are all set by regulation, the government can ratchet the whole system — higher fines, more offences, tighter tolerances — without ever passing a law. You get to disallow an instrument only within a short window most people never see. It is government by administrative fiat, on an apparatus that touches nearly every adult.

Guilty until you fill in the form

Ordinary criminal law says the state must prove you did it. Camera enforcement flips that. Under "owner-onus" / "operator-onus" provisions, the registered owner is liable *by default* and must actively act to escape it.



ORDINARY CRIMINAL PROCESS

The state must identify the driver and prove the offence beyond reasonable doubt before you're penalised.

CAMERA PROCESS

You're fined first. To escape it you must **nominate** the actual driver by statutory declaration (NSW s 186 — within a set period), or **prove** you weren't driving (QLD s 114, SA s 79B, WA s 87), or elect to fight it in court on your own time and cost.

The practical effect: the burden of identifying the driver is **shifted onto you**, and the default outcome if you do nothing is that you pay. Multiply that by millions of notices and you have a system engineered for compliance-by-inertia.

Sources: NSW Road Transport Act 2013 ss 186–187; Vic Road Safety Act 1986 s 66; QLD TORUM Act 1995 s 114; SA Road Traffic Act 1961 s 79B; WA Road Traffic (Administration) Act 2008 s 87. See [Sources](#).

Losing your licence – no court required

Demerit points and licence suspension are **administrative penalties**, imposed by the agency, on thresholds set by regulation, with no separate court hearing. In NSW, reaching the points threshold (13 for an unrestricted licence, 14 for professional drivers) triggers suspension by Transport for NSW under ss 33/40 — the points values themselves prescribed by regulation under s 43. A fine, points, and the loss of your livelihood can all flow from a camera flash, entirely within the executive branch.

Public power, private hands

The cameras themselves are frequently operated by private contractors (see [Surveillance](#)) — Serco in Victoria, Redflex/Acusensus in NSW. The legal structure keeps the fine "public": the contractor captures and processes the image, but the infringement notice is issued by a state agency (Revenue NSW, Victoria Police, the department) under the "approved device" and delegation framework. So a private company's equipment, operating under a commercial contract whose terms you can't see, sits at the front of a process that ends in a government fine, demerit points and possible suspension.

Sources: NSW Parliament Staysafe Committee, *Mobile speed camera enforcement programs in NSW*; NSW Government fines pages. See [Sources](#).

Parliament's own verdict on delegated law

This isn't a fringe complaint. Parliament's own reference works and scrutiny bodies describe the gap.

Under *Odgers' Australian Senate Practice* (Ch 15), delegated instruments take effect on registration and can only be **disallowed within 15 sitting days**; the scrutiny committee reviews for technical and rights issues but generally **avoids the underlying policy**, and the sheer volume means most instruments are never debated. Analysts at the Institute of Public Affairs and Australian Public Law have separately warned that delegated legislation lets the executive **"bypass democracy."**

Put it together: the power to *surveil* (approved devices, ANPR), to *fine* (amounts by regulation, indexed automatically), to *presume you guilty* (owner-onus regulations), and to *suspend your licence* (administrative thresholds) is exercised almost entirely by the executive and its delegates — under instruments that receive minimal parliamentary scrutiny.

The counterweight that proves the point

Victoria created a **Road Safety Camera Commissioner** (Act 2011) to oversee camera integrity and handle complaints. Tellingly, the Commissioner can review and report — but **cannot set penalties or issue fines**. The oversight is advisory; the power is executive.

Sources: [Odgers' Australian Senate Practice, Ch 15](#); [IPA — Bypassing Democracy](#); Road Safety Camera Commissioner Act 2011 (Vic).

Guilty by design.

The system fines you automatically, presumes you liable, and then makes the only way to fight it a *criminal* court — where, to get any mercy, you must stand up and say the word "guilty" first. Then it blames *you* for clogging the courts.

It's a criminal court, not a "traffic court"

Elect to challenge a camera fine in NSW and it doesn't go to some gentle administrative tribunal. It goes to the **Local Court's criminal jurisdiction** — the same stream that handles assaults and thefts. The court's own website spells out the stakes:

"For some traffic offences, you could receive a criminal conviction or a licence disqualification... The Court may issue you a fine at a higher amount than the penalty notice... You may have to pay legislated court costs."

– Local Court of NSW, "Going to court for a penalty notice"

Legal Aid confirms it plainly: "Your criminal record will also include... traffic offences where you have taken a fine to court, and the Court convicted you." So the machine's offer is: pay the automatic fine quietly, or roll the dice on a **criminal record and a bigger fine** to prove your innocence.

Sources: [Local Court NSW](#); [Legal Aid NSW](#).

And yes – this road leads to a cell

"You could go to jail over a camera fine" sounds like hyperbole. Trace the chain — every link is in the legislation:

Step	What happens
1	Camera fine issued. Don't/can't pay →
2	Overdue fine + \$65 fee → enforcement order →
3	Revenue NSW suspends your licence (an administrative act) →
4	You drive (to work, to a doctor) → driving while suspended , s54 Road Transport Act →
5	A criminal offence carrying up to 6 months' jail (first offence) or 12 months (subsequent)

To be precise: the camera fine itself isn't imprisonable — but the pathway it starts is. A missed fine becomes a suspended licence becomes a criminal charge becomes, potentially, jail. That is an absurd amount of coercive power hanging off a photograph of a numberplate.

Source: [Road Transport Act 2013 \(NSW\) s54](#) (max 6 months first / 12 months subsequent); [Legal Aid NSW \(enforcement pathway\)](#). See also [Punishing the Poor](#).

To get mercy, you must first confess

Here is the part that gives the game away. The "good outcome" everyone chases is a **Section 10** — a finding with *no conviction recorded*. But to get it, you must first be **found guilty or plead guilty**.

"Section 10 is a sentencing option that allows the court, **after a person has pleaded guilty or been found guilty**, to discharge the offender without recording a conviction."

— on s10, Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Act 1999 (NSW)

Read that again. Even if the magistrate privately thinks the whole revenue-camera apparatus is nonsense, the only lever they can pull to spare you requires **you to assume guilt** for an "offence" a machine decided you committed and the law presumes you liable for. You cannot say "this system is unjust" and get leniency. You must say "I did it, please be kind." The same trap exists in Victoria (s76 / s8 Sentencing Act) and Queensland (s12 Penalties and Sentences Act).

Who's actually clogging the courts?

The stock complaint is that self-represented "time-wasters" bog down the system. The data points the other way. In NSW, **traffic and vehicle offences are the single most common category of criminal matter — 45,371 defendants found guilty** of a traffic/vehicle principal offence in one year (2024–25). These are prosecutions *the state brings*, off the back of automated detection, into a criminal court.

Our view — and it follows from the facts

If contesting an automatic fine is the *only* way to test it, then the people "clogging the courts" are not the drivers exercising their sole avenue of defence — they're the agencies that built a guilty-by-default machine whose only appeal route is a criminal courtroom. The state manufactured the caseload, then blames the defendant for turning up.

Source: [BOCSAR NSW Criminal Court Statistics](#) (traffic/vehicle = most common principal offence). The "who clogs the courts" argument is our characterisation, grounded in that data.

The deck is stacked against the self-represented

Most people fighting a fine can't afford a lawyer for a \$300 ticket, so they self-represent — and self-represented litigants **fare measurably worse**, disadvantaged by procedure and paperwork (Productivity Commission; AIJA). Worse, courts are now primed to treat anyone self-representing on a "the system is illegitimate" theme as a "**sovereign citizen**" to be shut down fast: the NSW Judicial Commission issues bench guidance on identifying pseudolegal litigants, and Local Courts handled **300+ such matters in six months**.

That guidance exists for good reason — pseudolaw is genuine nonsense that has **never once succeeded** in an Australian court, and this site says so plainly (see [Right to Drive?](#)). But there's a side effect: an ordinary person with a legitimate grievance about an unjust fine can get **rounded down into the same bucket** — pattern-matched to the crank and dismissed before they've been heard. When the only people challenging the system get pre-labelled as cranks, the system never has to answer for itself.

Sources: [AIJA \(self-represented litigants fare worse\)](#); [The Conversation \(300+ cases; pseudolaw never wins\)](#). The "genuine grievances get lumped in with cranks" point is our inference from these facts, not a cited finding.

Armed for a photograph – and you're supposed to say thanks

When highway patrol pulls you over, the officer is carrying a **Glock** — the standard NSW Police sidearm — and broad statutory stop powers. For an alleged 3 km/h over the limit, the encounter carries the full apparatus of armed state force. That is, by design, intimidating.

And then there's the ritual gratitude. Get let off with a warning, or fined for one offence instead of three, and you're expected to feel *lucky* — grateful to the officer for "discretion," grateful the fine wasn't stacked higher, grateful the system didn't ruin your week. It's the logic of a shakedown dressed as a favour: manufacture a threat, then present not-quite-executing it as generosity. You are being asked to thank people for the restraint they showed while taking your money under a presumption of guilt.

Fact vs framing

The **facts**: traffic police are armed as standard and hold broad stop powers; fines, demerits and costs can be layered or reduced at official discretion. The **framing** — "intimidation," "shakedown," "manufactured gratitude" — is our editorial view of what that dynamic feels like from the driver's side. We think it's the honest description. You can judge.

Sources: [Australian Institute of Criminology \(police firearms carriage\)](#); [NSW police stop powers \(LEPRA s202\)](#).

The tell

A justice system confident its fines were fair wouldn't need to **presume you guilty**, **criminalise the appeal**, **demand a confession for mercy**, and **pre-label its critics as cranks**. It does all four. Meanwhile it's your one lawful avenue to be heard — see [Take Action](#) for how to use it anyway.

The fixes that don't fill a revenue fund.

Criticism is easy; here's the constructive half. The interventions that actually cut road deaths are well-evidenced — and they share one feature: they're *boring, un-billable, and design-based*. Nobody gets a fine. Which is precisely why they're not the priority.

Design the danger out of the road

The single biggest, most replicated win in road safety isn't a camera — it's a shape. Replace a signalised intersection with a **roundabout** and the severe crashes largely vanish.

SIGNALISED INTERSECTION

32 conflict points — including 16 crossing points that produce high-speed T-bones. Relies on drivers obeying a light; permits full-speed crossing; breeds red-light running (>1,000 US deaths/yr).

ROUNDABOUT

8 conflict points, zero crossing conflicts. Forces every driver to slow to ~15–30 km/h and *look*. Injury crashes down **72–80%**; fatal/serious down up to **~90%**.

That's not a rounding error — it's the difference between a fender-bender and a funeral. The FHWA estimates converting just 10% of America's signalised intersections would have prevented tens of thousands of crashes in a single year. Traffic lights don't make drivers *safe*; they make drivers *obedient* — staring at a bulb instead of assessing the road.

Sources: IIHS — Roundabouts; FHWA Roundabouts Informational Guide (conflict points); IIHS — Red-light running. The "lights breed obedience not awareness" point is an engineering argument (aligned with the self-explaining-roads work below), not a single measured statistic.

Self-explaining roads: trust drivers, and they pay attention

The counter-intuitive frontier: sometimes *removing* signs, lights and markings makes roads safer. The Dutch engineer **Hans Monderman** pioneered "shared space" — strip out the false certainty of traffic control and drivers, no longer on autopilot, slow down and negotiate by eye contact.

At the Laweiplein in Drachten, after the lights were removed: collisions fell from roughly 30 (with several injuries) over seven years to about **4 collisions and no injuries** in the two years after.

— shared-space redesign, Drachten, Netherlands

The mechanism is deliberate: a driver told exactly what to do stops thinking; a driver made responsible starts. **CONTESTED** — this works best on low-speed, low-volume urban streets, raises real accessibility concerns for blind and disabled pedestrians, and isn't a drop-in replacement for busy highways. But it proves the deeper point: **attention and good design beat surveillance and punishment.**

Source: Shared space / Hans Monderman (with criticisms); Project for Public Spaces.

Fix the roads where people actually die

Remember: ~two-thirds of Australian deaths are on **rural roads** (see **The Goldmines**) — run-off-road and head-on crashes no urban camera can touch. The fixes are unglamorous, passive, always-on engineering:

- **Centreline rumble strips** — head-on fatal/injury crashes down ~44%.

- **Shoulder rumble strips** — run-off-road fatal/injury crashes down ~36%.
- **Cable median barriers** — target the most lethal cross-median crashes.
- **Sealed shoulders** — give an errant vehicle room to recover instead of rolling.
- **Lower speeds by design** (narrower lanes, gateway treatments) rather than by a hidden camera and a fine.

These are the FHWA's "Proven Safety Countermeasures" — quantified, replicated, and they don't rely on catching anyone. A dollar spent on a median barrier on a country highway saves more lives than a dollar spent on a camera at the bottom of a city hill. The budgets say which one governments prefer.

Sources: [FHWA — Rumble strips](#); [FHWA Proven Safety Countermeasures](#).

Make better drivers – not more fined drivers

Here's where the intuition ("just teach people to drive properly") is right — but only if you do it the hard way. The evidence is blunt about the easy way.

Bolting a driver-ed class onto high school does NOT reduce crashes — and can make things worse. The landmark randomised DeKalb County study and the Cochrane systematic review both found that school driver-ed mainly gets teens *licensed earlier*, increasing their road exposure, so any skills gain is cancelled out. Cochrane's words: it provides "no evidence that driver education reduces road crash involvement" and "may... increase the proportion of teenagers involved in traffic crashes."

What *does* work is rigour and structure, applied early and seriously:

- **Graduated licensing** — the strongest-evidenced intervention there is: a real learner period with lots of supervised hours, night/passenger limits, staged privileges. Cuts young-driver crashes **20–40%**; a strict permit stage alone is linked to ~58% fewer fatal crashes for 16-year-olds.
- **Hazard-perception standards** — testing that makes drivers prove they can *read* a developing danger, not just steer.

- **The Nordic approach** — Finland's structured, multi-phase, insight-and-risk-based training and high standards; a licence you have to genuinely *earn*, not buy. (Honest caveat: even Finland's famous skid-pan drills showed no crash benefit and some overconfidence risk — the win is the rigorous *system and standards*, not any single gimmick.)

The lesson the exposé keeps hitting: spend the effort **up front** making genuinely competent, attentive drivers and building forgiving roads — instead of licensing people cheaply, then harvesting them with cameras and calling the fines "safety."

Sources: [Cochrane — school driver education](#); [DeKalb County study](#); [IIHS — graduated licensing](#); [Finland multi-phase licensing](#). Honesty note: generic driver-ed evidence is *strongly negative*; graduated licensing is *strongly positive*; hazard-perception *training* (vs testing) is mixed — we've labelled each.

The countries that lead do it by design, not by fines

Norway has the lowest road-death rate in the world — about **1.6 per 100,000** people (87 deaths in 2024). **Sweden**, birthplace of Vision Zero, cut its toll by more than half. They didn't get there by hiding cameras and indexing fines. They got there by **engineering the system so a human mistake doesn't cost a life** — safe speeds built into the road, separated traffic, forgiving roadsides, rigorous licensing, safe vehicles.

Yes, this is "Vision Zero" — the real one

Elsewhere on this site we criticise "Vision Zero" — but as a *marketing slogan* used to justify ever-more enforcement and revenue (see [The Strategy](#)). The Nordic original is a different animal: an **engineering and design philosophy** that shifts responsibility onto the people who *build* the system, not the individual to be fined. Australia adopted the logo and the enforcement; it skipped the expensive design work. That's why its toll is **rising** while Norway's falls.

Sources: [ITF/OECD — Norway \(2025\)](#); [WEF — Sweden's Vision Zero](#).

The whole argument, in one line

We know what saves lives — roundabouts, median barriers, rumble strips, graduated licensing, honest speed limits, and drivers taught properly. None of it issues a fine, fills a revenue fund, or logs your movements. The tragedy isn't that we don't know the answer. It's that the answer doesn't *pay*.

Ready to push back? The [Take Action](#) page has FOI templates and how to challenge a fine.

Every excuse, answered.

You'll hear the same lines every time you question a camera. Here's the comeback to each — short, and backed by the government's own audits, budgets and crash data. Screenshot one; win the argument.

“ Speed kills — so any camera saves lives.

ANSWER Speed is "a factor" in roughly **one in four to one in three** fatal crashes — but that bundles illegal high-range speeding with driving *too fast for the conditions* (often *under* the limit) and crashes caused by something else entirely. There is **no published Australian figure** for crashes caused by exceeding the limit on an otherwise safe road — the exact thing low-level camera fines target. [Unpack the numbers →](#)

“ If you don't speed, you won't get a fine.

ANSWER Only Victoria publishes its enforcement tolerance (2 km/h); everywhere else it's secret and any amount over is an offence. Add owner-onus (you must prove you weren't driving), AI phone/seatbelt cameras that misread objects, and NSW alone **refunded nearly 19,000 wrongful fines** after one software error. "Just don't speed" assumes a machine that never errs and a limit you're allowed to know. [See the errors →](#)

“ Cameras go where the crashes are.

ANSWER Victoria's Auditor-General found **15 of 33** sampled AI camera sites had *no crash record at all*. In NSW, **80% of fixed and red-light cameras sit in greater Sydney** while most people are killed on country roads. And when NSW hid its mobile cameras in 2020, fines jumped ninefold — hiding a camera raises money, not safety. [See it on the map →](#)

“ It’s about safety, not revenue.

ANSWER In one year NSW's "road safety" fund spent **\$118m running the cameras** and **\$36.7m funding police** — the enforcement pays for the enforcement. Camera fines equal about **a tenth of the entire state police budget**, and budget papers forecast fine revenue to keep rising, never fall. A safety program would budget for fines to shrink toward zero.

Follow the fund →

“ Speed cameras have cut the road toll.

ANSWER The national toll is **up ~22%** since the plan to *halve* it — during the biggest camera-enforcement expansion in the country's history. About **a quarter** of the measured "camera effect" is just regression to the mean (crashes spike randomly, then fall back), and the research is rated "moderate quality at best." **Weigh the evidence →**

“ If you’ve nothing to hide, you’ve nothing to fear.

ANSWER A single ANPR unit reads **16 number plates a second** — every plate logged, guilty or not, and kept for years. Phone-detection cameras photograph the inside of *every* car. This gear, sold "for road safety," has already been repurposed to enforce COVID lockdowns. The fine is the excuse; the surveillance is the product. **See the grid →**

“ The speed limit is the safe speed.

ANSWER Limits used to be anchored to how people actually drive (the 85th-percentile rule) — that engineering principle is being quietly retired. Only one state will tell you its camera tolerance, and the limits, fine amounts and owner-onus rules are set by **regulation and delegation** — not a vote. **See who really decides →**

“ Fines make people drive better.

ANSWER NSW drug-driving charges rose **+836%** while the state's own crime bureau found "no evidence" behaviour actually changed — the surge is an enforcement artefact. A flat fine costs a millionaire minutes and a single parent a fortnight, and unpaid fines can spiral into a licence loss and even a cell. That's punishment by wallet, not safety. **See who pays →**

“ **The private operators are just efficient contractors.**

ANSWER The company that has run NSW mobile speed cameras was at the centre of one of the biggest municipal **bribery scandals in Chicago's history** — executives went to federal prison. The Australian contracts, worth hundreds of millions, are **secret**. Overseas, some deals historically paid operators a cut of every ticket. [Read the contracts →](#)

“ **Speed cameras are world's best practice.**

ANSWER Then why have towns switched them off, cities voted them out, and whole regions **banned** them — without the bloodbath the industry predicts? Plenty of places treat cameras as a discredited shortcut and invest in roads that are safe *by design* instead.

[See who fought back →](#)

“ **You agreed to all this when you got your licence.**

ANSWER You never needed a licence to ride a horse down the same road. "Mobility is a privilege, not a right" is a *political choice*, not a law of nature — and none of the fines, the secret tolerances, the in-cabin cameras or the plate-tracking was ever put to the public.

[Right to drive? →](#)

Now go win the argument

Every claim above traces to a government audit, budget paper, Act or study on this site — check any of them on [Sources](#). Grab a [shareable card](#) to make the point in a feed, or hand someone the whole [printable report](#).

Prise it loose yourself.

This whole exposé keeps hitting the same wall: the damning numbers aren't published. So make them. Freedom-of-Information (and NSW's GIPA / Queensland's RTI) laws let any member of the public demand them. Below are ready-to-send requests — **with the exact, verified addresses to send them to**. Copy, add your name and the date, and file. In NSW you can ask for *informal release* first, which is **free**.

What to ask for – the gaps worth exposing

- **Crash history at a "goldmine" camera** — the 5-year crash record at a specific high-revenue camera site, to test whether it's a blackspot or a trap (see [Goldmines](#)).
 - **The contractor's payment model** — how the private camera operator is actually paid (per hour vs per fine), and the contract value (see [Contracts](#)).
 - **Error & withdrawal rates** — how many camera fines were reviewed, withdrawn or refunded, and the false-positive rate (see [Errors](#)).
 - **Road-safety fund spending** — how much of the hypothecated fund was collected vs actually spent (the underspend, see [The Money](#)).
 - **Marketing spend** — the advertising/campaign budget vs fine revenue (the propaganda ratio, see [The Strategy](#)).
-

Template 1 – Camera siting & crash history

Tests the "cameras go where the crashes are" claim. Address it to your state road agency / police (NSW: Transport for NSW or Revenue NSW; VIC: Dept of Justice & Community Safety; QLD: Transport & Main Roads).

To the FOI/GIPA Officer,

Under the [Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (NSW) / Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Vic) / Right to Information Act 2009 (Qld) / relevant FOI Act], I request access to the following information:

1. For the fixed/mobile speed or red-light camera located at [ADDRESS / INTERSECTION], for the most recent 5 financial years:
 - (a) the number of infringements issued, by year;
 - (b) the total revenue raised, by year;
 - (c) the recorded casualty and fatal crash history at that location for the 5 years BEFORE the camera was installed, and for each year SINCE; and
 - (d) the site-selection justification / business case used to approve the camera at that location.

I ask that documents be provided in electronic form. If any part is refused, please cite the specific exemption and provide the balance.

[Name] [Contact details] [Date]

Template 2 – Contractor payment & contract terms

Tests the incentive to over-issue fines and the secrecy of the deals.

To the FOI/GIPA Officer,

Under the [relevant FOI/GIPA Act], I request:

1. The current contract(s) between [agency] and the private operator(s) of the state's speed / red-light / mobile-phone detection cameras (e.g. Acusensus, Redflex/Verra Mobility, Serco, Jenoptik).
2. In particular, the clauses setting out HOW the operator is remunerated – specifically whether payment is per hour of enforcement, a fixed fee, or linked in any way to the number or value of infringements detected.
3. The total value of each such contract and its start and end dates.

Where commercial-in-confidence is claimed, please release the payment-structure and total-value clauses with only genuinely commercial pricing detail redacted, and state the public-interest reasoning for any redaction.

[Name] [Contact details] [Date]

Template 3 – Error, review & withdrawal rates

The number no one advertises: how often the "infallible" machine is wrong.

To the FOI/GIPA Officer,

Under the [relevant FOI/GIPA Act], for each of the last 3 financial years, I request statistics showing, for camera-detected traffic infringements:

1. the total number of infringements issued;
2. the number for which a review was requested;
3. the number withdrawn, waived or refunded, and the total value;
4. for mobile-phone/seatbelt AI cameras: the number of images flagged by the system that were rejected at human review (i.e. the machine's false-positive count or rate); and
5. any internal report on camera accuracy, calibration failures or erroneously issued fines during the period.

Electronic format preferred.

[Name] [Contact details] [Date]

Template 4 – Road-safety fund underspend

Tests "it all goes back into road safety."

To the FOI/GIPA Officer,

Under the [relevant FOI/GIPA Act], for each of the last 5 financial years, I request:

1. the total revenue paid INTO the [Community Road Safety Fund /

Better Roads Victoria Trust / Road Trauma Trust Account / relevant fund] from camera and traffic fines;

2. the total amount actually SPENT from that fund each year;
3. the closing balance / accumulated unspent amount each year; and
4. a breakdown of what the spent money was spent on.

Electronic format preferred.

[Name] [Contact details] [Date]

Template 5 – The Community Road Safety Fund (the loop)

Prises open the self-funding loop on **The Fund** — how much comes in, how much is spent, and how much bankrolls more cameras and police. Send to accessapplications@transport.nsw.gov.au (Transport for NSW).

Send to: accessapplications@transport.nsw.gov.au (Transport for NSW)

Subject: Informal access request (GIPA) – Community Road Safety Fund

To the Access to Information / GIPA Officer,

Under the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (NSW), I request informal release of the following. If informal release is declined, please treat this as a formal access application and advise the \$30 application fee.

For each of the last 5 financial years:

1. Total revenue paid INTO the Community Road Safety Fund, broken down by source – fixed speed cameras, mobile speed cameras, red-light cameras, mobile-phone/seatbelt cameras, average/point-to-point cameras, and any allocation from the Consolidated Fund.
2. Total amount SPENT from the Fund each year, itemised by program – in particular the amounts spent on (a) police enforcement and (b) operating the automated camera enforcement program itself.
3. The closing balance / accumulated unspent amount at the end of each year.
4. Any amount transferred FROM the Fund back into the Consolidated Fund.

Please provide documents in electronic form (a spreadsheet if available).

[Your name] · [email or postal address] · [date]

Template 6 – ANPR retention & enforcement targets

Tests the **surveillance** grid: how long every plate is kept, who can see it, and whether police work to revenue targets. Lodge with NSW Police (online GIPA portal; enquiries iau@police.nsw.gov.au).

```
Send to: NSW Police Force – GIPA online portal (police.nsw.gov.au → "GIPA");  
enquiries iau@police.nsw.gov.au    ($30 formal application)  
Subject: GIPA application – ANPR retention and camera enforcement
```

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To the Information Access Unit,
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```
Under the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (NSW), I request:
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1. For automatic number-plate recognition (ANPR): the number of plates read/logged per year for the last 3 years; the retention period for reads that do NOT match any alert ("non-hit" reads); the policy governing who may access ANPR data; and any record of ANPR data being accessed for a purpose other than vehicle-registration or traffic enforcement (e.g. movement or location tracking).
2. For mobile speed cameras: the total contracted and actual HOURS of enforcement per year for the last 3 years.
3. Any internal document that sets a revenue target, KPI, quota or expected number of infringements for traffic or camera enforcement.

```
Electronic format preferred.
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[Your name] · [contact] · [date]
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Template 7 – The statistic they never publish

Goes to the heart of **Speed**: the isolated causal contribution of *illegal* speeding. Send to the Commonwealth department that houses BITRE — foi@infrastructure.gov.au (no fee; a plain email is enough).

Send to: foi@infrastructure.gov.au (Dept of Infrastructure / BITRE – no fee)
Subject: FOI request – isolated causal contribution of illegal speeding

To the FOI Coordinator,

Under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Cth), I request access to any document, dataset or analysis held by the Department or by BITRE that:

1. quantifies the number or proportion of fatal or serious-injury crashes attributable specifically to a driver EXCEEDING THE POSTED SPEED LIMIT on a road that was otherwise compliant – as distinct from "travelling too fast for the conditions" (often at or below the limit), and as distinct from crashes primarily caused by alcohol, drugs, fatigue or distraction; and
2. sets out the methodology and definition by which a crash is classified as "speed-related" or "speeding-related" in national crash statistics.

If no such document exists, I ask the Department to confirm that in writing.

A plain electronic copy is fine. I'm happy to narrow scope to stay within any processing-charge threshold.

[Your name] · [contact] · [date]

Template 8 – Camera tolerance & per-site crash history

The secret margin, and whether the top earners are blackspots or traps (see [Speed](#), [Goldmines](#)). Send to accessapplications@transport.nsw.gov.au (Transport for NSW).

Send to: accessapplications@transport.nsw.gov.au (Transport for NSW)
Subject: Informal access request (GIPA) – speed camera tolerance & site data

To the Access to Information / GIPA Officer,

Under the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (NSW), I request (informal release preferred; if declined, treat as a formal application and advise the \$30 fee):

1. The speed enforcement threshold/tolerance applied before a FIXED camera, and before a MOBILE camera, issues an infringement (the km/h or % over

the posted limit).

2. For the 10 highest-revenue fixed speed and red-light camera locations in the most recent financial year: the infringements issued and revenue raised by year (last 5 years), and the recorded injury and fatal crash history at each site for the 5 years BEFORE the camera was installed and for each year SINCE.
3. The site-selection justification / business case used to approve each of those cameras.

Electronic form (spreadsheet if available).

[Your name] · [contact] · [date]

Template 9 – Cabin-camera accuracy & the contract

The false-positive rate no one publishes, plus how the operator is paid (see [Cabin Cameras, Contracts](#)). To accessapplications@transport.nsw.gov.au.

Send to: accessapplications@transport.nsw.gov.au (Transport for NSW)

Subject: Informal access request (GIPA) – phone/seatbelt camera accuracy & contract

To the Access to Information / GIPA Officer,

Under the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (NSW), for the last 3 financial years for mobile-phone and seatbelt detection cameras:

1. The number of vehicle images captured; the number AI-flagged as possible offences; and the number REJECTED at human review (i.e. the machine's false-positive count or rate).
2. The number of penalty notices issued; the number challenged/reviewed; and the number WITHDRAWN or refunded, with the total value.
3. The retention/deletion policy for non-offence ("innocent") images.
4. The current contract(s) with the camera operator (Acusensus), in particular the clauses setting out HOW the operator is paid – per hour, fixed fee, or linked to the number/value of detections – and the total contract value.

Where commercial-in-confidence is claimed over the payment structure, please release those clauses with only genuine pricing detail redacted, and state the public-interest reasoning.

Template 10 – Total camera revenue & withdrawal rates

The full revenue picture and how often fines are quietly reversed (see [The Money, Errors](#)). To Revenue NSW via gipa@customerservice.nsw.gov.au.

Send to: gipa@customerservice.nsw.gov.au (Revenue NSW, via Dept of Customer Service)
Subject: Informal access request (GIPA) – camera fine revenue & reviews

To the GIPA Team,

Under the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (NSW), for each of the last 5 financial years:

1. Total penalty-notice revenue from CAMERA-detected offences, split by type (fixed speed, mobile speed, red-light, mobile-phone, seatbelt, average / point-to-point speed).
2. The number of penalty notices issued, by type.
3. The number for which a review was requested; the number withdrawn, waived or refunded; and the total dollar value withdrawn.
4. The number that escalated to enforcement action (e.g. licence or registration sanction).

Electronic form (spreadsheet).

[Your name] · [contact] · [date]

Template 11 – Victoria: revenue, tolerance & siting

The Victorian versions of the same questions, including the 2026 VAGO "15 of 33" siting gap. To foi@transport.vic.gov.au (Dept of Transport & Planning); cc foi@police.vic.gov.au for enforcement/siting.

Send to: foi@transport.vic.gov.au (Dept of Transport & Planning)
Cc: foi@police.vic.gov.au (Victoria Police – enforcement & siting)
Subject: FOI request – road-safety camera revenue, tolerance and site selection

To the FOI Officer,

Under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Vic), for the last 3 financial years:

1. Road-safety-camera fine revenue by camera type.
2. The enforcement tolerance applied before a camera issues an infringement.
3. For distracted-driver and seatbelt cameras: images captured, AI-flagged, rejected at human review (false positives), fines issued, reviewed and withdrawn.
4. The crash history and site-selection basis for the AI camera sites examined in the 2026 VAGO audit (the finding that 15 of 33 sites had no crash record).

I request a fee waiver on public-interest grounds. Electronic copy.

[Your name] · [contact] · [date]

Template 12 – Queensland: CDOP revenue & spending

Where Queensland's ~\$466m camera haul goes, and whether its cameras sit at crashes. Lodge via the e-RTI portal at [rti.qld.gov.au](https://www.rti.qld.gov.au) (<https://www.rti.qld.gov.au>); enquiries contactrti@tmr.qld.gov.au — ask for free "administrative access" first.

Send to: Qld Transport & Main Roads – e-RTI portal ([rti.qld.gov.au](https://www.rti.qld.gov.au), approved form);
enquiries contactrti@tmr.qld.gov.au (ask for free "administrative access" first)
Subject: RTI / administrative access – Camera Detected Offence Program

To the RTI Team,

Under the Right to Information Act 2009 (Qld) – or by administrative access if available – for the last 5 financial years:

1. Camera Detected Offence Program (CDOP) revenue by camera type.
2. The road-safety expenditure that revenue funded, itemised by program.
3. The speed enforcement tolerance applied before a camera issues a fine.

4. For the 10 highest-revenue camera sites, the recorded crash history for the 5 years before and after installation.

Electronic form (spreadsheet if available).

[Your name] · [contact] · [date]

Where to send it – verified contacts

The addresses below were checked against each agency's own page. Where an agency prefers a portal or a mandatory form, that's noted — using it is the safest route.

Agency (what they hold)	Send to	Fee
Transport for NSW — cameras, the road-safety fund GIPA	accessapplications@transport.nsw.gov.au	free informal / \$30 formal
Revenue NSW — fine revenue, penalty notices GIPA	gipa@customerservice.nsw.gov.au (via Dept of Customer Service)	free informal / \$30 formal
NSW Police Force — mobile cameras, ANPR GIPA	Online GIPA portal at police.nsw.gov.au (https://www.police.nsw.gov.au/online_services/requesting_information/gipaa); enquiries iau@police.nsw.gov.au	\$30 formal
Dept of Transport & Planning (VIC) — VicRoads / cameras FOI	foi@transport.vic.gov.au · portal online.foi.vic.gov.au (https://online.foi.vic.gov.au)	~\$34.50 (waivable)
Victoria Police — enforcement FOI	foi@police.vic.gov.au	~\$34.50 (waivable)
Transport & Main Roads (QLD) — camera program RTI	e-RTI portal rti.qld.gov.au (https://www.rti.qld.gov.au) (approved form); enquiries contactrti@tmr.qld.gov.au	ask for free "administrative access"; ~\$59.60 formal
Queensland Police RTI	e-RTI portal rti.qld.gov.au (https://www.rti.qld.gov.au); rti@police.qld.gov.au	as above

Agency (what they hold)	Send to	Fee
Dept of Infrastructure / BITRE — national crash data FOI (CTH)	foi@infrastructure.gov.au	no fee — a plain email is enough

✓ **NSW (GIPA)** — ask for informal release first (free); if refused, a formal application is \$30 and the agency has 20 working days. Oversight: **IPC NSW** (<https://www.ipc.nsw.gov.au/>).

✓ **VIC (FOI)** — ~\$34.50 application fee, waivable for hardship or public interest; 30 days. Oversight: **OVIC** (<https://ovic.vic.gov.au/>).

✓ **QLD (RTI)** — a formal request needs the approved RTI form and card payment via the e-RTI portal; but ask the RTI team for free "administrative access" first. Oversight: **OIC Qld** (<https://www.oic.qld.gov.au/>).

✓ **Federal (FOI)** — no application fee, a plain email works, 30 days. Oversight: **OAIC** (<https://www.oaic.gov.au/>).

✓ **SA / WA / TAS / ACT / NT** — each has its own FOI/RTI Act; adapt any template above and search "[state] FOI request".

Fees change on 1 July each year (VIC/QLD) — confirm the current figure on the agency page. Always ask for a fee waiver on public-interest grounds. Got something back? Send it in via whistle@theradicalparty.com or [GitHub](#) — we'll add it, with credit or in confidence.

Got a fine? Know your moves

- **Request a review.** Every state lets you ask the issuing agency to review a fine — cite faulty signage, calibration doubt, or exceptional circumstances (see **Errors**: a camera certificate is *not* automatic guilt).
- **Elect to have it heard in court** if you genuinely dispute it — the prosecution must prove the offence, including that the device was operating correctly.

- **Can't afford it?** In NSW, ask about a **Work and Development Order** (<https://www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au/my-problem-is-about/fines/work-and-development-orders-wdos/work-and-development-order-scheme>); other states have hardship schemes. Don't let an unpaid fine snowball into a licence loss (see **Punishing the Poor**).
- **Private "parking fine"?** On private land it's usually a *breach-of-contract invoice*, not a government fine — often an unenforceable penalty (see **the parking racket**). Get advice before paying.

General information only — not legal advice. Rules and deadlines differ by state and change over time; check your official state authority and consider free community legal help before acting.

SOURCES

Don't take our word for it.

That's the entire point of this site. Below is the public record behind every claim — audits, budget papers, legislation, crash data and reporting. Where a figure is a government *claim*, *contested*, or *illustrative*, we say so on the page it appears.

The Strategy

- **National Road Safety Strategy 2021–30** (targets, Safe System, data-hub commitment) — [roadsafety.gov.au \(PDF\)](https://www.roadsafety.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/National-Road-Safety-Strategy-2021-30.pdf) (<https://www.roadsafety.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/National-Road-Safety-Strategy-2021-30.pdf>)

 - **National Road Safety Action Plan 2023–25** — [roadsafety.gov.au](https://www.roadsafety.gov.au/action-plan/national-road-safety-action-plan-2023-25) (<https://www.roadsafety.gov.au/action-plan/national-road-safety-action-plan-2023-25>)

 - **BITRE — Road Trauma Australia 2024** (toll trend, per-capita rate) — [bitre.gov.au \(PDF\)](https://www.bitre.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/road-trauma-australia-2024.pdf) (<https://www.bitre.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/road-trauma-australia-2024.pdf>)

 - **BITRE — Road Deaths Australia, Monthly Bulletin (Dec 2025)** (annual death series) — datahub.roadsafety.gov.au (<https://datahub.roadsafety.gov.au/>)

 - **Australian Automobile Association — Benchmarking the NRSS** (off-track %, "wish-list," 2-of-5 KPIs) — [aaa.asn.au \(PDF\)](https://www.aaa.asn.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/230514_AAA_Benchmarking-NRSS-Report-Mar-QTR-2023-WEB.pdf) (https://www.aaa.asn.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/230514_AAA_Benchmarking-NRSS-Report-Mar-QTR-2023-WEB.pdf) · [benchmarking series](https://www.aaa.asn.au/research/benchmarking/) (<https://www.aaa.asn.au/research/benchmarking/>)

 - **Office of Road Safety** (established 1 July 2019; National Road Safety Data Hub) — [officeofroadsafety.gov.au](https://www.officeofroadsafety.gov.au/) (<https://www.officeofroadsafety.gov.au/>)
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The Money

- **Victoria — revenue from fines (\$473m, 2023-24; Better Roads Victoria Trust) —**
vic.gov.au (<https://www.vic.gov.au/revenue-fines>) • **camerassavelives.vic.gov.au** (<https://www.camerassavelives.vic.gov.au/fines-penalties/revenue-from-fines>)

- **Queensland — Camera Detected Offence Program (\$464.3m; 63% low-range; +70% growth; hypothecation under TORUM Act 1995) —**
tmr.qld.gov.au (<https://www.tmr.qld.gov.au/safety/road-safety/camera-detected-offence-program>) • **program evaluation** (<https://www.publications.qld.gov.au/dataset/evaluation-of-the-queensland-camera-detected-offence-program>)

- **NSW Budget 2024-25 — Budget Paper 1, Revenue (fines/fees forward estimates \$3.59bn → \$4.15bn) —**
budget.nsw.gov.au (PDF) (<https://www.budget.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2024-06/BP1-Chpt-4-Revenue-2024-25.pdf>)

- **NSW warning-sign removal & fine spike —**
Border Mail (<https://www.bordermail.com.au/story/7122458/fines-increase-significantly-after-warning-signs-removed-from-cameras/>) • **NSW Parliament Staysafe Committee — Final Report (PDF)** (<https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/tp/files/82129/Final%20Report%20-%20Mobile%20speed%20camera%20enforcement%20programs%20in%20NSW.pdf>)

- **NSW — return of warning signs, ~90% fine drop (2023) —**
nsw.gov.au media release (<https://www.nsw.gov.au/media-releases/return-of-warning-signs-for-mobile-speed-cameras>)

- **NSW Audit Office — Community Road Safety Fund underspend —**
audit.nsw.gov.au (<https://www.audit.nsw.gov.au/our-work/reports/regional-road-safety>)

- **WA Auditor-General & Road Trauma Trust Account (~\$120m unspent) —**
audit.wa.gov.au (<https://audit.wa.gov.au/reports-and-publications/reports/management-of-the-road-trauma-trust-account/>) • **RTTA** (<https://www.wa.gov.au/organisation/road-safety-commission/road-trauma-trust-account>)

The Fund – fines vs police

budgets

- **NSW Community Road Safety Fund — mechanism, inflows & spending** (receives all camera fines; 2022-23 \$454m/\$283m, 2023-24 \$479m/\$261m; **police enforcement \$36.7m & automated camera program \$118.4m** in 2023-24) — **TfNSW — NSW Road Safety Progress Report 2024 (PDF, pp.53-54)** (https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/system/files/media/documents/2025/crs_road_safety_progress_report_2024.pdf)

- **NSW Auditor-General — Regional Road Safety (Nov 2023)** (fund underspent since 2019, 12%→20%, ~\$104m 2022-23; \$73m unallocated; no regional targets) — **audit.nsw.gov.au** (<https://www.audit.nsw.gov.au/our-work/reports/regional-road-safety>)

- **NSW Budget 2025-26 — Budget Paper 1, Ch.5 Revenue, Table 5.7** ("Fines" \$713m 2023-24 → \$793m 2028-29 forward estimates) — **budget.nsw.gov.au (PDF)** (<https://www.budget.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2025-06/bp1-budget-statement-chapter5-revenue-nsw-budget-2025-26.pdf>)

- **Victoria — camera fines \$473m (2023-24) → Better Roads Victoria Trust** — **vic.gov.au** (<https://www.vic.gov.au/revenue-fines>); **Victoria Police funding ~\$4.5bn (2024-25)** — **Victoria Police Annual Report 2024-25** (<https://www.police.vic.gov.au/victoria-police-annual-report-2024-25/victoria-police-annual-report-2024-25-our-performance>)

- **NSW Police Force budget (~\$5.51bn, 2024-25)** [reported; confirm against appropriation line] — **NSW Police Annual Report** (https://www.police.nsw.gov.au/about_us/publications) · **NSW Budget Paper 3** (<https://www.budget.nsw.gov.au/>)

- **Queensland CDOP hypothecation (TORUM Act 1995)** (\$274.5m 2021-22 → ~\$465.8m 2022-23, reinvested in road safety) — **tmr.qld.gov.au** (<https://www.tmr.qld.gov.au/safety/road-safety/camera-detected-offence-program>); **QLD Audit Office — Road safety: traffic cameras** (<https://www.qao.qld.gov.au/reports-resources/road-safety-traffic-cameras>) ("revenue raising" concerns; 2015-16)

- **Note on revenue "quotas/targets":** no primary source found for official police fine quotas; the site does *not* assert them — the incentive argument is structural (fine revenue funds the enforcer), not a claim of secret targets.

Speed & crash data

- **Victorian Auditor-General (VAGO) — Road Safety Camera Program (2011)** (siting; revenue "not the primary purpose") — [audit.vic.gov.au](https://www.audit.vic.gov.au/report/road-safety-camera-program) (<https://www.audit.vic.gov.au/report/road-safety-camera-program>)
- **VAGO — Reducing the Harm Caused by Distracted Drivers (2026)** (15 of 33 sites had no crash record; effectiveness "not clear") — [audit.vic.gov.au](https://www.audit.vic.gov.au/report/reducing-harm-caused-distracted-drivers) (<https://www.audit.vic.gov.au/report/reducing-harm-caused-distracted-drivers>)
- **NSW Auditor-General — Mobile Speed Cameras (2018)** (siting concentration; limited network deterrence) — [audit.nsw.gov.au](https://www.audit.nsw.gov.au/our-work/reports/mobile-speed-cameras) (<https://www.audit.nsw.gov.au/our-work/reports/mobile-speed-cameras>)
- **TAC (Victoria) — speeding "a factor" in 1-in-4 fatal crashes; definition** — [tac.vic.gov.au](https://www.tac.vic.gov.au/road-safety/staying-safe/speeding) (<https://www.tac.vic.gov.au/road-safety/staying-safe/speeding>)
- **Kloeden et al. — CR 207: Travelling speed & risk of crash involvement (Adelaide)** — [infrastructure.gov.au](https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/departments/media/publications/cr-207-reanalysis-travelling-speed-and-risk-crash-involvement-adelaide-south-australia-2002) (<https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/departments/media/publications/cr-207-reanalysis-travelling-speed-and-risk-crash-involvement-adelaide-south-australia-2002>)
- **Enforcement tolerances (Victoria 2 km/h / 3 km/h)** — [RACV](https://www.racv.com.au/cars-transport/road-safety/road-rules/enforcement.html) (<https://www.racv.com.au/cars-transport/road-safety/road-rules/enforcement.html>)
- **85th-percentile speed & speed zoning** — [Main Roads WA](https://www.mainroads.wa.gov.au/technical-commercial/technical-library/road-traffic-engineering/traffic-management/speed-zones/) (<https://www.mainroads.wa.gov.au/technical-commercial/technical-library/road-traffic-engineering/traffic-management/speed-zones/>) • [Austroads Guide to Road Safety Part 3](https://austroads.gov.au/publications/road-safety/agrs03-24) (<https://austroads.gov.au/publications/road-safety/agrs03-24>) • [US FHWA Speed Limit Setting Handbook](https://highways.dot.gov/sites/fhwa.dot.gov/files/Speed-Limit-Setting-Handbook.pdf) (<https://highways.dot.gov/sites/fhwa.dot.gov/files/Speed-Limit-Setting-Handbook.pdf>)
- **Solomon curve & its critiques** (Solomon 1964; West & Dunn 1971; Fildes et al. 1991) — [overview with primary citations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Solomon_curve) (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Solomon_curve)

Surveillance

- **ANPR in Australia — architecture, scale, retention** — [Roger Clarke](http://www.rogerclarke.com/DV/ANPR-Surv.html) (<http://www.rogerclarke.com/DV/ANPR-Surv.html>) • [Astor Legal](https://astorlegal.com.au/anpr-automatic-number-plate-recognition/) (<https://astorlegal.com.au/anpr-automatic-number-plate-recognition/>)
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- **Australian Privacy Foundation — ANPR policy** ("mass surveillance," "honeypot") — [privacy.org.au](https://privacy.org.au/policies/anpr/) (https://privacy.org.au/policies/anpr/)
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- **Mobile-phone detection cameras — how they work, what they capture** — [NRSP](https://www.nrspp.org.au/mobile-phone-detection-cameras-everything-you-need-to-know/) (https://www.nrspp.org.au/mobile-phone-detection-cameras-everything-you-need-to-know/) · **Transport & Main Roads QLD** (https://www.tcq.org.au/camera-detected-offences/)
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- **National rollout & seatbelt cameras (dates by state)** — [CarExpert](https://www.carexpert.com.au/car-news/which-australian-states-and-territories-use-mobile-phone-cameras) (https://www.carexpert.com.au/car-news/which-australian-states-and-territories-use-mobile-phone-cameras) · [Premier of Victoria](https://www.premier.vic.gov.au/site-4/new-driver-distraction-cameras-switched) (https://www.premier.vic.gov.au/site-4/new-driver-distraction-cameras-switched) · [QLD Government](https://statements.qld.gov.au/statements/92753) (https://statements.qld.gov.au/statements/92753)
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- **Average-speed cameras — heavy-vehicle origin & light-vehicle extension** — [NSW Government](https://www.nsw.gov.au/media-releases/average-speed-camera-trial-to-investigate-safety-dividend) (https://www.nsw.gov.au/media-releases/average-speed-camera-trial-to-investigate-safety-dividend) · [NRMA](https://www.mynrma.com.au/open-road/news/2025/nsw-average-speed-camera-trial) (https://www.mynrma.com.au/open-road/news/2025/nsw-average-speed-camera-trial)
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- **Function creep — Victoria Police ANPR used for COVID lockdown enforcement** — [Policing Insight](https://policinginsight.com/media-monitoring/victoria-police-using-anpr-to-ensure-sydney-siders-stay-in-nsw-after-covid-19-outbreak-worsens/) (https://policinginsight.com/media-monitoring/victoria-police-using-anpr-to-ensure-sydney-siders-stay-in-nsw-after-covid-19-outbreak-worsens/)
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- **Private operators** — [iNews \(Acusensus\)](https://www.itnews.com.au/news/tfnsw-extends-deal-for-mobile-phone-detection-cameras-602910) (https://www.itnews.com.au/news/tfnsw-extends-deal-for-mobile-phone-detection-cameras-602910) · [Serco \(VIC\)](https://www.serco.com/aspac/news/media-releases/2019/serco-wins-road-safety-rebid-in-victoria) (https://www.serco.com/aspac/news/media-releases/2019/serco-wins-road-safety-rebid-in-victoria) · [Redflex / Verra Mobility](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Redflex_Holdings) (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Redflex_Holdings)
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Cabin Cameras (phone & seatbelt detection)

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- **NSW program — how it works, fines, deletion of non-offence images** — [Transport for NSW](https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/roadsafety/topics-tips/mobile-phones) (https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/roadsafety/topics-tips/mobile-phones) · [NRSP](https://www.nrspp.org.au/mobile-phone-detection-cameras-everything-you-need-to-know/) (https://www.nrspp.org.au/mobile-phone-detection-cameras-everything-you-need-to-know/) · [NRMA \(fine/revenue figures\)](https://www.mynrma.com.au/open-road/advice-and-how-to/road-safety/mobile-phone-detection-cameras) (https://www.mynrma.com.au/open-road/advice-and-how-to/road-safety/mobile-phone-detection-cameras)
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- **Queensland — "images of every vehicle," auto-deletion, biometrics claim** — [qld.gov.au](https://www.qld.gov.au/transport/safety/fines/cameras) (https://www.qld.gov.au/transport/safety/fines/cameras)
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- **Seatbelt cameras go live, no grace period — 11,400 fines in 21 days, ~75% incorrect wearing — Transport for NSW media release (4 Aug 2024, PDF)** (https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/system/files/media/documents/2024/Media_release_Seatbelt_cameras_reveal_alarming_rate_of_offences.pdf)

- **National rollout & state-by-state fines/dates — CarExpert** (<https://www.carexpert.com.au/car-news/which-australian-states-and-territories-use-mobile-phone-cameras>) • **Victorian Government** (<https://www.vic.gov.au/mobile-phone-and-seatbelt-detection-cameras>)

- **Accountability gap — AI ethical risk assessment not completed — iTnews, on the Queensland Audit Office finding (26 Sep 2025)** (<https://www.itnews.com.au/news/qld-ai-traffic-cameras-flagged-over-missing-ethical-checks-620568>)

- **Civil-liberties critique — data use/retention, reverse burden of proof, algorithm transparency — NSW Council for Civil Liberties (15 Nov 2019)** (https://www.nswccl.org.au/nsw_mobile_phone_detection_bill_flawed)

- **Private operator & contracts (Acusensus) — iTnews (TfNSW extension)** (<https://www.itnews.com.au/news/tfnsw-extends-deal-for-mobile-phone-detection-cameras-602910>)

Note: no Australian jurisdiction publishes an AI false-positive or appeal-withdrawal rate, and no primary "total revenue since 2020" figure exists — only per-year figures are quoted. The garbled "\$34m to one driver" claim circulating online is unverified and is **not** used here.

Delegations & legal machinery

- **NSW Road Transport Act 2013** — s 195 (penalty notices), s 183 (approved device), s 273 (delegation), ss 186–187 (owner onus/nomination), s 43 (demerit points), ss 33/40 (suspension) — **legislation.nsw.gov.au** (<https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/whole/html/inforce/current/act-2013-018>)

- **Victoria Road Safety Act 1986** — s 66 (operator onus), ss 80/83A (camera evidence) — **legislation.vic.gov.au** (<https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/road-safety-act-1986>); **Road Safety (General) Regulations 2019**, reg 32 — **legislation.vic.gov.au** (<https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/statutory-rules/road-safety-general-regulations-2019>)

- **Queensland TORUM Act 1995** — s 114 (deemed liability) — **austlii.edu.au** (https://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/qld/consol_act/touma1995434/s114.html)

→ **SA Road Traffic Act 1961** — s 79B (owner guilty unless proved) — [austlii.edu.au](https://classic.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/sa/consol_act/rta1961111/s79b.html) (https://classic.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/sa/consol_act/rta1961111/s79b.html)

→ **WA Road Traffic (Administration) Act 2008** — ss 86–87 (responsible person presumed driver) — [legislation.wa.gov.au](https://www.legislation.wa.gov.au/) (https://www.legislation.wa.gov.au/)

→ **Delegated-legislation scrutiny gap** — **Odgers' Australian Senate Practice, Ch 15** (https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Senate/Practice_and_Procedure/Odgers_Australian_Senate_Practice/Chapter_15) • **IPA — Bypassing Democracy** (https://ipa.org.au/research/bypassing-democracy-a-report-on-the-exemption-of-delegated-legislation-from-parliamentary-oversight) • **Australian Public Law** (https://www.auspublaw.org/blog/2020/07/delegated-legislation-and-democracy)

→ **Victoria Road Safety Camera Commissioner Act 2011** (oversight only, no power to fine) — [austlii.edu.au](https://classic.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_act/rscga2011300/index.html) (https://classic.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_act/rscga2011300/index.html)

The Goldmines & geographic mismatch

→ **BITRE — Road Trauma Australia 2024** (regional/remote death share, per-capita rates) — [bitre.gov.au \(PDF\)](https://www.bitre.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/road-trauma-australia-2024.pdf) (https://www.bitre.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/road-trauma-australia-2024.pdf)

→ **BITRE Information Sheet 112 — Run-off-road crashes 2016–2020** (39% of fatal crashes, 96% single-vehicle) — [bitre.gov.au \(PDF\)](https://www.bitre.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/is_112_run-off-road-crashes-australia-2016-2020.pdf) (https://www.bitre.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/is_112_run-off-road-crashes-australia-2016-2020.pdf)

→ **NRSS Regional & Remote road safety fact sheets** — [roadsafety.gov.au](https://www.roadsafety.gov.au/nrss/fact-sheets/regional-road-safety) (https://www.roadsafety.gov.au/nrss/fact-sheets/regional-road-safety)

→ **TfNSW 2023 Enforcement Camera Review** (camera siting; ~17% casualty reduction where sited) — [transport.nsw.gov.au \(PDF\)](https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/system/files/media/documents/2025/crs_2023_enforcement_camera_review.pdf) (https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/system/files/media/documents/2025/crs_2023_enforcement_camera_review.pdf)

→ **Top-earning cameras** — **CarExpert (VIC/QLD)** (https://www.carexpert.com.au/car-news/victorias-top-earning-speed-cameras) • **NSW top earners (Revenue NSW data)** (https://au.finance.yahoo.com/news/11-highest-earning-traffic-cameras-nsw-194607677.html) • **Newcastle Herald (Hannell St)** (https://www.newcastleherald.com.au/story/8725193/)

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- **Revenue up / toll up — CarExpert** (<https://www.carexpert.com.au/opinion/the-latest-data-shows-speed-cameras-dont-save-lives>) • **WhichCar (80% automated)** (<https://www.whichcar.com.au/news/ai-traffic-cameras-lead-to-surge-in-road-fines-across-australia>)
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The Evidence (academic)

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- **Wilson, Willis et al. — Cochrane review of speed cameras (2010)** ("moderate quality at best"; no RCTs) — **pubmed** (<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/21069682/>)
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- **Pilkington & Kinra — systematic review, BMJ (2005) — PMC** (<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC548705/>)
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- **UK four-year national camera evaluation (2005) — regression-to-the-mean correction (25% → 19%), Appendix H (Mountain & Maher) — PDF** (https://speedcamerareport.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/1f96f-d6a4f-4_year_evaluation.pdf)
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- **European Commission — regression to the mean in speed enforcement — road-safety.transport.ec.europa.eu** (https://road-safety.transport.ec.europa.eu/eu-road-safety-policy/priorities/safe-road-use/safe-speed/archive/speed-enforcement/additional-considerations-speed-enforcement/regression-mean_en)
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- **Erke — red-light cameras meta-analysis (2009)** (rear-end +40%; RTM sensitivity) — **pubmed** (<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/19664425/>); **FHWA red-light camera evaluation (2005)** (net +\$18.5M) — **PDF** (<https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/research/safety/05048/05048.pdf>)
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- **Høye — section control & speed camera meta-analysis (EU SafetyCube synopsis) — PDF** (https://www.roadsafety-dss.eu/assets/data/pdf/synopses/Installation_of_section_control_speed_cameras_23102017.pdf)
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- **MUARC Report 307 (Victoria fixed camera evaluation; RTM defence) — monash.edu** (<https://www.monash.edu/muarc/archive/our-publications/reports/muarc307>)
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Contracts & Corruption

- **Chicago–Redflex bribery — US DOJ** (<https://www.justice.gov/usao-ndil/pr/retired-chicago-official-arrested-federal-bribery-charge-taking-cash-and-personal>) • **ABC7 (Bills)** (<https://abc7chicago.com/john-bills-sentence-chicago-red-light-camera-scandal/1489610/>) • **CBS (Finley)** (<https://www.cbsnews.com/chicago/news/ex-redflex-ceo-gets-30-months-for-aiding-red-light-camera-bribery/>) • **NBC (\$20M settlement)** (<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/chicago-settles-lawsuit-against-redflex-for-20m-following-red-light-camera-scandal/28663/>)
- **Verra Mobility acquires Redflex (2021) — Verra Mobility** (<https://www.verramobility.com/verra-mobility-acquires-redflex/>) • **Redflex Holdings** (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Redflex_Holdings)
- **Australian operator contracts — Serco (VIC \$178M)** (<https://www.serco.com/aspac/news/media-releases/2019/serco-wins-road-safety-rebid-in-victoria>) • **Acusensus (NSW)** (<https://www.tipranks.com/news/company-announcements/acusensus-wins-extension-to-key-nsw-mobile-speed-camera-contract>) • **Jenoptik (WA)** (<http://www.traffictechnologytoday.com/news/enforcement/jenoptik-wins-major-speed-and-red-light-camera-order-in-australia.html>)
- **Per-ticket payment ban (Maryland) — CBS Baltimore** (<https://www.cbsnews.com/baltimore/news/new-law-stops-speed-camera-companies-from-profiting-per-ticket/>)
- **Amber-light shortening — Slate (Florida)** (<https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2013/05/traffic-cameras-did-florida-shorten-its-yellow-lights-to-rake-in-traffic-camera-revenue.html>) • **Chicago 2.9s** (<https://www.thenewspaper.com/news/64/6412.asp>) • **Georgia HB 77** (<https://www.thenewspaper.com/news/27/2713.asp>)
- **Longer amber beats cameras — Texas TTI** (<https://static.tti.tamu.edu/tti.tamu.edu/documents/0-4196-P1.pdf>) • **IIHS (Philadelphia)** (<https://www.iihs.org/research-areas/red-light-running>)

Faults & Errors

- **2017 WannaCry infection of Victorian cameras — iTnews** (<https://www.itnews.com.au/news/vic-tighens-speed-camera-security-after-wannacry-scare-491618>) • **Global News** (<https://globalnews.ca/news/3553543/camera-traffic-tickets-withdrawn-australia-wannacry-virus/>) • Road Safety Camera Commissioner (Vic), *WannaCry malware infection* (2018)
 - **NSW mass refunds 2007–2010 (18,944 tickets) — thenewspaper.com** (<https://www.thenewspaper.com/news/32/3255.asp>)
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→ **Victorian faulty cameras / Datsun "impossible speed" / West Gate —**

thenewspaper.com (<https://www.thenewspaper.com/news/23/2384.asp>)

→ **RTA of NSW v Michell (2006) — camera evidence not automatically conclusive —**

thenewspaper.com (<https://www.thenewspaper.com/news/10/1037.asp>)

→ **NSW fine review/waiver data — data.nsw.gov.au** (<https://www.data.nsw.gov.au/data/dataset/be766026-4174-4e3e-88b4-ef7d67acd32f>); **AAP FactCheck (enhanced images)** (<https://www.aap.com.au/factcheck/photo-evidence-claim-tampers-with-the-truth/>)

Punishing the Poor

→ **The Australia Institute — Refining Fines (2024) (regressive flat fines) —**

australiainstitute.org.au (<https://australiainstitute.org.au/report/refining-fines/>)

→ **ALRC Report 133 — Pathways to Justice, ch.12 (Fines & Driver Licences) — alrc.gov.au**

(<https://www.alrc.gov.au/publication/pathways-to-justice-inquiry-into-the-incarceration-rate-of-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-peoples-alrc-report-133/12-fines-and-driver-licences/>)

→ **WA Coroner — Inquest into the death of Ms Dhu (2016) — coronerscourt.wa.gov.au** (https://www.coronerscourt.wa.gov.au/inquest_into_the_death_of_ms_dhu.aspx)

→ **Enforcement pipeline & costs — Legal Aid NSW** (<https://www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au/ways-to-get-help/publications-and-resources/fined-out/enforcement-action-by-revenue-nsw>); Redfern Legal Centre (unpaid fines ~\$1bn)

→ **Work and Development Orders — Legal Aid NSW** (<https://www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au/my-problem-is-about/fines/work-and-development-orders-wdos/work-and-development-order-scheme>)

Drug Testing

- **Presence not impairment** — **Alcohol and Drug Foundation** (<https://adf.org.au/insights/roadside-drug-testing/>) • **NUAA** (<https://nuaa.org.au/roadside-mobile-drug-tests>) • **Harm Reduction Australia (2025)** (<https://www.harmreductionaustralia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Drive-Change-NSW-REPORT-Final-19.2.25.pdf>)
- **Device error rates (University of Sydney, Lambert Initiative)** — **sydney.edu.au** (<https://www.sydney.edu.au/news-opinion/news/2019/09/12/study-casts-doubt-on-accuracy-of-mobile-drug-testing-devices-.html>)
- **Absolute-liability ruling (Feb 2025, NSWCCA)** — **Sydney Criminal Lawyers** (<https://www.sydneycriminallawyers.com.au/blog/former-nsw-magistrate-david-heilpern-condemns-absolute-liability-drug-driving-ruling/>)
- **BOCSAR — drug-driving charge & testing trends (2024)** (+836%; "no evidence... driven by behaviour") — **bocsar.nsw.gov.au** (<http://bocsar.nsw.gov.au/media/2024/mr-trends-drug-driving-bb172.html>)
- **Medicinal-cannabis reform** — **Premier of Victoria (trial)** (<https://www.premier.vic.gov.au/green-light-world-first-medicinal-cannabis-driving-trial>) • **NSW Government** (<https://www.nsw.gov.au/ministerial-releases/cannabis-drivers-not-immediately-penalised>)

The World Fights Back

- **Swindon switch-off (2009)** — **road.cc** (<https://road.cc/content/news/21135-speed-camera-opponents-hail-success-swindon-switch-do-figures-back>); **Oxfordshire (2010)** — **BBC** (<https://feeds.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-oxfordshire-10832111>)
- **US bans & referendums** — **Texas Tribune (statewide ban)** (<https://www.texastribune.org/2019/05/17/texas-lawmakers-vote-ban-red-light-cameras/>) • **Ballotpedia** (https://ballotpedia.org/Local_red_light_cameras_on_the_ballot) • **Arizona** (<https://www.thenewspaper.com/news/32/3202.asp>)
- **UK "netting off" hypothecation history** — **Road Safety GB** (<https://roadsafety.network/kb/safety-cameras/>)

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- **Public revolts** — **BBC (Fleximan, Italy)** (<https://feeds.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-68103948>) • **The Local (France)** (<https://www.thelocal.fr/20190301/three-quarters-of-all-speed-cameras-in-france-have-been-vandalised>)
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Vision Zero, marketing & deeper surveillance

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- **Vision Zero critiques** — **Arguments Against Vision Zero (Springer)** (https://link.springer.com/rwe/10.1007/978-3-030-23176-7_3-1)
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- **Road-safety advertising spend** — **TAC Annual Report** (<https://www.tac.vic.gov.au/about-the-tac/media-room/annual-reports>) • **NSW Auditor-General, Government Advertising 2022–23** (<https://www.audit.nsw.gov.au/our-work/reports/government-advertising-2022-23>)
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- **The "43 lives" unreleased modelling & public perception** — **ACRS** (<https://acrs.org.au/nsw-speed-camera-signage-reinstatement-ignores-the-evidence/>) • **Road Safety Camera Commissioner survey** (<https://cameracommissioner.vic.gov.au/publications/road-safety-camera-commissioner-survey-wave-3>)
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- **NDLFRS / facial recognition** — **iTnews** (<https://www.itnews.com.au/news/three-states-complete-national-face-matching-database-upload-535352>) • **EFA (WA live FR)** (<https://efa.org.au/wa-police-facial-recognition/>)
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- **Toll-data access & connected cars** — **NSW Parliament (Transurban QoN)** (<https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/lcdocs/other/17429/Further%20answers%20to%20questions%20on%20notice%20-%20Transurban%20-%20received%2025%20May%202022.pdf>) • **US FTC (GM/OnStar)** (<https://www.ftc.gov/news-events/news/press-releases/2026/01/ftc-finalizes-order-settling-allegations-gm-onstar-collected-sold-geolocation-data-without-consumers>)
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- **Data breaches / database misuse** — **Service NSW** (<https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/services/cyber-security/service-nsw-cyber-incident>) • **OAIC** (<https://www.oaic.gov.au/updates/news-and-media/statement-on-reported-data-breach-involving-nsw-driver-licences/>) • **IBAC (LEAP)** (<https://www.ibac.vic.gov.au/predatory-behaviour-by-police>)
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- **Inquiry into the National Road Safety Strategy 2011–2020** — **roadsafety.gov.au** (<https://www.roadsafety.gov.au/nrss/inquiry>)
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The Toll Scam

- **NSW Independent Toll Review (Fels/Cousins, 2024)** — Transurban monopoly; \$2.5bn/yr, \$195bn/35yr — **nsw.gov.au** (<https://www.nsw.gov.au/media-releases/toll-review-to-reform-motorway-pricing>)

- **Transurban FY24 results** (revenue A\$3.535bn, EBITDA A\$2.632bn, profit A\$376m) — **transurban.com (PDF)** (<https://www.transurban.com/content/dam/investor-centre/01/FY24-ASXRelease.pdf>); **tax structure** — **Michael West Media** (<https://michaelwest.com.au/transurban-tollroad-giant-pays-tax-no/>)

- **WestConnex sale & cost** — **NSW Treasury** (<https://www.treasury.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-10/20211029%20-%20MED%20REL%20-%20TREASURY%20-%20NSW%20GOVERNMENT%20FINALISES%20SALIE%20OF%20WESTCONNEX.pdf>) · **NSW Auditor-General** (<https://www.audit.nsw.gov.au/our-work/reports/westconnex-changes-since-2014>)

- **Toll-road failures bought cheap** — **SBS (AirportLink)** (<https://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/transurban-buys-airportlink-for-a-bargain/x0fyvohl2>) · **Lane Cove Tunnel** (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lane_Cove_Tunnel) · **Cross City Tunnel** (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cross_City_Tunnel)

- **Non-compete/compensation clauses & donations** — **Cross City Tunnel deed reporting** (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cross_City_Tunnel) · **Australian Greens (donations)** (<https://greens.org.au/vic/news/media-release/transurbans-donations-old-parties-put-mega-toll-roads-question-say-greens>)

By State

- **NSW** — Community Road Safety Fund underspend — **NSW Audit Office** (<https://www.audit.nsw.gov.au/our-work/reports/regional-road-safety>); **VIC tolerance & \$473M** — **vic.gov.au** (<https://www.vic.gov.au/revenue-fines>)

- **QLD CDOP (\$464M, low-level fines)** — **CarExpert** (<https://www.carexpert.com.au/car-news/how-low-level-speeding-fines-are-filling-this-states-coffers>); **SA speed camera audit** — **DIT SA (PDF)** (https://dit.sa.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0015/520404/South_Australia_Speed_Camera_Audit_-_FINAL_REPORT.PDF)

- **WA Road Trauma Trust Account (~\$120m unspent)** — **WA Auditor-General** (<https://audit.wa.gov.au/reports-and-publications/reports/management-of-the-road-trauma-trust-account/>)

→ **TAS \$9.5M + calls to ring-fence** — **The Examiner** (<https://www.examiner.com.au/story/8354216/call-for-speed-fine-revenue-to-be-ringfenced-to-fund-road-safety/>); **ACT ~\$1M/month gantry, no fund** — **inkl** (<https://www.inkl.com/news/the-hidden-camera-yielding-the-act-govt-1-million-a-month>) • **Canberra Times** (<https://www.canberratimes.com.au/story/8657388/act-camera-offences-added-with-fines-for-unregistered-vehicles/>)

→ **NT lightest enforcement, worst toll** — **speedcam.com.au** (<https://www.speedcam.com.au/blog/speed-cameras-northern-territory/>) • **NT Speed Management Strategy** (<https://dli.nt.gov.au/media/docs/reports-strategies-and-plans/speed-management-strategy.pdf>)

Right to Drive? & the parking racket

→ **Licensing/plate history** — **SA 1906** (<https://adelaideaz.com/articles/south-australia-first-with-licensing-and-registration-in-1906--plates-become-valued>) • **Motor Car Act 1909 (Vic) history, Melb Univ Law Review** (<https://classic.austlii.edu.au/au/journals/MelbULawRw/2005/26.html>) • **NSW 1909/1910** (<https://nsw.heritageonly.com.au/history/>)

→ **Constitution s92 & freedom of movement** — **s92** (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Section_92_of_the_Constitution_of_Australia) • **Gerner v Victoria [2020] HCA 48** (<https://www.hcourt.gov.au/cases-and-judgments/judgments/judgments-1998-current/gerner-v-victoria>) • **ALRC (Freedom of Movement)** (<https://www.alrc.gov.au/publication/traditional-rights-and-freedoms-encroachments-by-commonwealth-laws-ip-46/5-freedom-of-movement/>)

→ **Pseudolaw never succeeds** — **NSW Judicial Commission** (https://www.judcom.nsw.gov.au/publications/benchbks/judicial_officers/sovereign_citizens.html); **US right to travel ≠ driving** — **FindLaw** (<https://www.findlaw.com/traffic/drivers-license-vehicle-info/what-is-the-right-to-travel.html>)

→ **Parking — councils** — **NSW Government (ticketless)** (<https://www.nsw.gov.au/media-releases/ticketless-parking-fines-surge-49-as-councils-double-down-on-controversial-system>); **Victorian Ombudsman refunds** — **ombudsman.vic.gov.au** (<https://www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au/our-impact/investigation-reports/investigation-into-three-councils-outsourcing-of-parking-fine-internal-reviews/>)

→ **Private "parking fines" are invoices** — **Consumer Affairs Victoria** (<https://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/consumers-and-businesses/cars/parking-payment-notices-in-private-car-parks>) • **Consumer Action Law Centre** (<https://consumeraction.org.au/private-car-parking-fines/>)

The Court Trap

- **Local Court criminal jurisdiction / criminal record** — **Local Court NSW** (<https://localcourt.nsw.gov.au/about-us/jurisdictions0/criminal-jurisdiction/going-to-court-for-a-penalty-notice.html>) • **Legal Aid NSW** (<https://www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au/my-problem-is-about/fines/fines-go-to-court/driving-and-criminal-record>)
- **Driving while suspended = jail pathway (s54 Road Transport Act 2013)** — **Sydney Criminal Lawyers** (<https://www.sydneycriminallawyers.com.au/traffic/legislation/road-transport-act/driving-whilst-disqualified-suspended-or-cancelled/>)
- **Section 10 requires a finding/plea of guilt first** — **Armstrong Legal (s10 CSPA 1999)** (<https://www.armstronglegal.com.au/criminal-law/nsw/penalties-and-sentencing/section-10-dismissal/>); VIC s76 / QLD s12 equivalents
- **Traffic = most common criminal matter (caseload)** — **BOCSAR NSW Criminal Court Statistics** (<https://bocsar.nsw.gov.au/research-evaluations/2024/criminal-court-statistics-jun-2024.html>)
- **Self-represented litigants fare worse** — **AIJA** (<https://aija.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/SRL-Policy-and-Practice-FINAL.pdf>); **sovereign-citizen bench guidance / 300+ cases** — **The Conversation** (<https://theconversation.com/what-does-australian-law-have-to-say-about-sovereign-citizens-and-pseudolaw-260289>)
- **Costs against unsuccessful defendants (TfNSW/RMS)** — **Judicial Commission bench book** (https://www.judcom.nsw.gov.au/publications/benchbks/local/costs_in_criminal_matters.html); **police firearms** — **AIC** (<https://www.aic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-05/sarre.pdf>)

What Actually Works

- **Roundabouts vs signals (72–80% injury reduction; 8 vs 32 conflict points)** — **IIHS** (<https://www.iihs.org/topics/roundabouts>) • **FHWA Roundabouts Guide** (<https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/research/safety/00067/00067.pdf>)
 - **Self-explaining roads / shared space (Monderman, Drachten)** — **Shared space (with criticisms)** (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shared_space) • **Project for Public Spaces** (<https://www.pps.org/article/hans-monderman>)
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- **Safe System infrastructure** (rumble strips, barriers, shoulders) — **FHWA rumble strips** (<https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/research/safety/17026/17026.pdf>) • **FHWA Proven Safety Countermeasures** (<https://highways.dot.gov/safety/proven-safety-countermeasures>)

- **School driver-ed does NOT reduce crashes** — **Cochrane review** (https://www.cochrane.org/evidence/CD003201_school-based-driver-education-leads-early-licensing-and-may-increase-road-crash-rates) • **DeKalb County study** (<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0001457586900485>)

- **Graduated licensing works (20–40%)** — **IIHS** (<https://www.iihs.org/research-areas/teenagers>); **Finland multi-phase model** — **licensing in Finland** (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Driving_licence_in_Finland)

- **Nordic outcomes / Vision Zero by design** — **ITF/OECD Norway** (<https://www.itf-oecd.org/sites/default/files/norway-road-safety.pdf>) • **WEF (Sweden)** (<https://www.weforum.org/stories/2018/04/sweden-zero-vision-traffic-road-deaths/>)

How to check us – and help

Every claim on this site should be traceable to a document above. If you find an error, or you have a primary-source document (an FOI response, a contract, a budget line) that strengthens or corrects a point, that makes this stronger. The site is open-source:

github.com/kingomarwashere/safety-theatre (<https://github.com/kingomarwashere/safety-theatre>)

A note on integrity: several primary PDFs (some auditor-general and legislation pages) blocked automated retrieval during research, so a handful of figures were cross-checked against reputable secondary reporting and are labelled accordingly on each page. Section numbers and report titles are verified; before quoting an exact statutory wording, read the current consolidated provision at the linked register.

You didn't vote for any of this.

Almost none of it — the fines, the tolerances, the cameras that photograph inside your car, the fund that recycles your money into more of it — was debated in Parliament, let alone put to the public. The Radical Party exists to change who decides: direct democracy, where you vote on the policies, not just the politicians. Join at **theradicalparty.com/join**.

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