



PEDESTRIAN COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA

Safety – Amenity – Access – Health

The Walking Class Heroes

Patrons: Dame Leonie Kramer AC DBE & The Hon Sir Laurence Street AC KCMG

MEDIA RELEASE

Monday 14 September 2009

FoI Reveals VicRoads Incompetence

8 Years and \$420,000 to Develop Front-Plates for Motorcycles

One Motorcyclist in NSW Travelled Illegally Through Speed Cameras Over 2,000 Times in 12 Months

Background: The genesis of the most recent proposal to fit motorcycle front identifiers was in late 2000. At that time, the Conference of Commissioners of Police of Australia and the South West Pacific Region, expressed concern that motorcycle riders can avoid speed camera penalties when photographed by cameras in the "approach mode" due to the lack of identification on the front. The Conference called for the re-introduction of front identification on motorcycles.

In 2001, the Victorian Ministerial Council for Road Safety determined that the fitting of front identifiers on motorcycles should be investigated. VicRoads then began work on developing a standard for a front registration number decal (sticker). In 2003, it was agreed nationally to jointly fund a project to develop options for the introduction of front identification of motorcycles. In November 2004, the Australian Transport Council endorsed a project to develop frontal identification systems for motorcycles with Victoria as lead agency. \$420,000 funding assistance from the other states and territories was provided.

The recently released Victoria's Road Safety and Transport Strategic Action Plan for Powered Two Wheelers 2009 - 2013 specifically refers to, '... identifying vehicles engaged in illegal acts ...' as a significant issue. It also states that, 'Frontal identification of motorcycles using decals or front number plates has been investigated and not found to be a satisfactory solution. However, the potential for alternative solutions will be explored further. ... it has now been agreed that the Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads would pursue a technology based solution for identifying motorcycles as lead agency in a national process'.

The Chairman of the PCA, Harold Scruby said today: "Following several years trying to discover why there had been no results, the PCA submitted a Freedom of Information application to VicRoads in May 2009. It was like extracting teeth. Finally, it was revealed that after over 8 years and spending over \$420,000, VicRoads has achieved absolutely nothing. In classic "Yes Minister" style, VicRoads has now decided to pass-the-parcel to Queensland Transport.

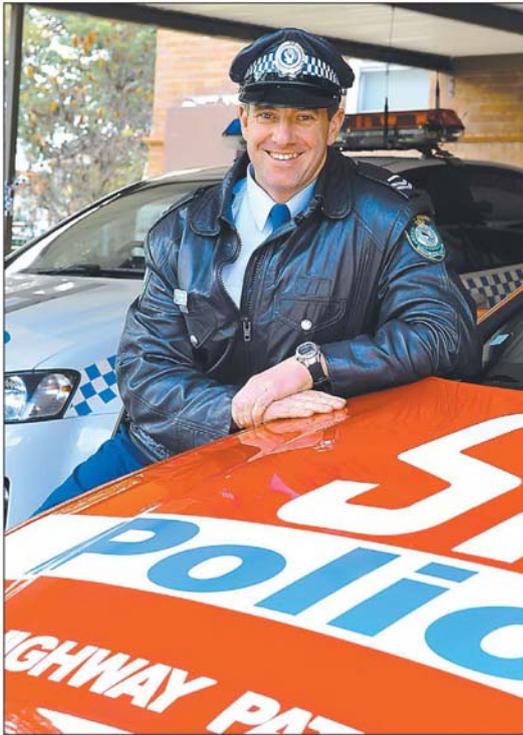
"Between 2003 and 2008 national road deaths decreased by an average of 1.4% per year. All road user groups decreased, except for motorcycle deaths which increased by an average of 5.7% annually.

"All police and road safety authorities have had very serious concerns about this issue for nearly a decade. In Queensland in 2007, police were unable to prosecute over 7,000 high range speeding motorcyclists (over 45 km/h over the speed limit) due to lack of front plates. Additionally, the authorities have expressed serious concerns about homeland security and bikie-gang issues.

"In NSW, a Collaroy motorcyclist was wanted by police for travelling past speed cameras with his hand covering the Harley Davidson's registration plate more than 2,000 times over 12 months. An observant police officer caught the offender who lost more than 200 Demerit Points and was fined \$7,500.

Mr Scruby said: "This is bureaucratic ineptitude of such magnitude, it would make Sir Humphrey blush. We could put a man on the moon 40 years ago, but after 8 years and \$420,000, VicRoads still can't put a front number-plate on a motor-bike. We therefore call on the Federal Minister for Transport, the Hon Anthony Albanese, to take control of this vital road safety initiative and commit to fixing the problem within a year.

Contact: Harold Scruby – (0418) 110-011 – See full details of the FoI at: www.walk.com.au



Constable Damian Preston.

Picture: DAVE SWIFT

GOTCHA!

Cop who caught our most notorious traffic offender

Kelly Robinson

AN observant police officer has proven our emergency services are never really off-duty, catching a motorcyclist who had been evading speed cameras and toll fines for more than 12 months.

Northern beaches officer Senior Constable Damian Preston, who is with Harbourside Highway Patrol, was recently awarded a Certificate of Merit during the NSW Police Force Medals and Awards ceremony for tracking down the rider.

The Collaroy motorcyclist was wanted by police for travelling past speed cameras with his hand covering the Harley Davidson's registration plate –

more than 2000 times over 12 months.

Sen-Constable Preston was travelling to work one morning last October when he spotted the man riding a Harley Davidson on Manly Rd in Seaforth and recognised him from camera footage.

"I saw this bike rider jump in the bus lane and I thought the clothing he was wearing looked familiar and he was wearing a distinctive helmet," he said.

Sen-Constable Preston followed the man over the Spit Bridge and saw him cover his number plate past the speed camera on Spit Hill.

He took down the number plate and police were able to arrest the man after further inquiries.

The Harley rider appeared in Manly Court recently facing 62 charges. He lost more than 200 demerit points and was fined \$7500.

"He was the Highway Patrol's number one offender at the time," he said.

"It was a good result. It's probably one of the most memorable cases I've worked on. I haven't come across anything like this before."

Harbourside Insp Craig James said Sen-Constable Preston's actions and police work had been "outstanding".

"This can be a very thankless job and he is a very worthy recipient of this merit award which puts all of his good work into perspective," he said.