

# Speed and Death - An Assessment of the Practical Application of Research Predictions Regarding Urban Speeding

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## Biography

Eric Howard is the General Manager – Road Safety with VicRoads, responsible for the delivery of road safety in Victoria, and has held this position since 1998. Eric has been responsible for overseeing the development of *alive alive!* the 2002-2007 Victorian Road Safety Strategy. A specific component of the strategy is a comprehensive review of speed management on Victoria's roads in conjunction with other road safety agencies, which has led to expanded use of new technology for speed enforcement, more stringent speed enforcement, the introduction of a 50 km/h default speed limit in urban areas and lower speed limits in high pedestrian activity locations.

Eric has been responsible for development and implementation of extensive drink driving and other legislation as further key components of the Strategy including requirements for alcohol interlock use and tougher penalties and demerit points for drink driving, speeding and other offences.

Eric oversaw the introduction of the new Road Rules Victoria, new drug driving legislation for Victoria and has responsibility for development and implementation of the \$240m accident blackspot program in Victoria and the development and promotion of the safer vehicles package for fleet buyers. In addition he oversees the ongoing review of road safety design standards and road accident reporting procedures within VicRoads. He has fostered an extensive program of road safety strategy development by Victoria's 78 local governments, drawing upon more than 20 years of experience in chief executive and other senior roles within local government across Victoria.

Eric is chair of the Victorian Road Safety Reference Group, a member of the National Road Safety Strategy panel, and a director of the Monash University Accident Research Centre.

## Abstract

Travel speed as a factor in the incidence and severity of road trauma has been a long-standing issue within the field of road safety. Research conducted over many years has predicted significant reductions in road trauma from relatively small reductions in travel speed, but implementing policy to take advantage of these predicted gains has often been problematic.

Work undertaken by Monash University Accident Research Centre for the development of *arrive alive!* Victoria's Road Safety Strategy 2002-2007 indicated the potential for large reductions in road trauma to be achieved through increasing the amount of camera based speed enforcement, and reducing the enforcement threshold for speeding offences. On the basis of this work, and of research undertaken at the Road Accident Research Unit at the University of Adelaide, Victoria has implemented a coordinated campaign to reduce speeding through education, publicity and enhancements to camera-based enforcement. This campaign has attracted substantial public and political opposition, but has resulted in reductions of approximately 25% in road death on metropolitan roads that are consistent with the forecast provided by research.

This paper will discuss the research basis for the campaign, the outcomes to date, and the public policy issues concerning the perceived motivations and effectiveness of the campaign.