



Never Stand Still

Speed - the biggest and most contested road killer



Lori Mooren, Prof Raphael Grzebieta, Prof Soames Job
Transport and Road Safety (TARS) Research | School of Aviation | UNSW

Study objectives & methods

- Examine how community attitudes to speeding are influenced
- Search Google on terms:
 - Australia nanny state speed enforcement
 - (3 million articles & blogs)
 - Australia road safety speed enforcement
 - (1.36 million articles & blogs)
- Compare the views and facts presented



Definitions of *speed* and *nanny state*

Definition of (unsafe) speed:

- *Driving too fast for the road & traffic conditions*
- *Exceeding the legal speed limit*

(Speed Management: a road safety manual)



Definition of nanny state:

- *A government perceived as having excessive interest in or control over the welfare of its citizens, especially in the enforcement of extensive public health and safety regulations* (American Heritage Dictionary)



Examples of nanny state debate

- Mainstream media –
 - Today Tonight
 - A Current Affair
 - News interviews – Mark Skaife, Mark Webber
- Websites
 - Liberal Democratic Party
 - Outdoor Recreation Party
- Blogs
 - *the only person at risk is yourself, you don't care about the nanny state road rules.*
 - *I rely on my vehicle's performance for extra safety ... get back in your Corolla and keep out of the right-hand lane.*



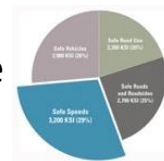
Arguments for nanny state views

- **Civil liberties** –
 - Liberal Democratic Party & Outdoor Recreation Party policies
 - Rights to choose speed and optimise high performance vehicles
- **Offensive** –
 - to be “treated like naughty children”
 - Revenue raising
- **Social detriment** –
 - discourages individual responsibility
- **Safety disbenefits** –
 - driving faster may combat fatigue



Pro speed enforcement views

- Evidence that speed enforcement **saves lives**
 - Mostly governments and researchers
- Evidence that **speed is a factor** in a large proportion of serious crashes
- Evidence that incremental speed increases have **exponential harm** effects in crashes
- Evidence that speed **cameras reduce speeding** and crashes



Evidence that speed enforcement works

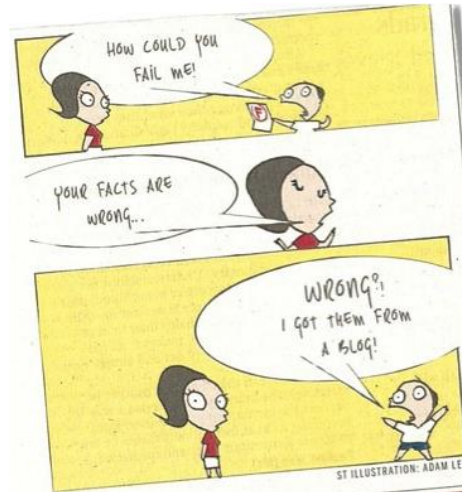


Discussion

- Scientific versus social discourse at odds
- More people get informed by commercial media, internet sites and blogs
- Political populism is strong in Australia
- Risk behaviour is normal for humans
- Individual experience supports speeding
- People are willing to debate speed issues



Journalism student



Challenges

- Academics discouraged from social media debate
- Government practitioners discouraged from any debate
- Politicians are more strongly influenced by public opinion than scientific evidence
- Efforts to convey the evidence is time-consuming and costly
- People just like to speed, damn it.



Influencing public opinion

- Need to engage with community opinion leaders
- 2-way communications – dialogue campaigns
- Better use of social media in campaigns
- Leverage community demand for speed management
- Make speeding socially unacceptable through strategic messaging (esp on social media)



Recommendations:

- gain an understanding of the key anti-speed enforcement positions held by major and minor opinion leaders in Australia;
- develop more effective ways of influencing community debate on speeding; and
- explore, develop, trial and evaluate “dialogue communications” campaigns on speeding.

