



## Speeding - back in the news

Speeding has attracted considerable media attention recently, with Police expressing disgust at the increasing number of motorists being detected. Part of the reason is the loosening of guidelines for deployment of cameras, removal of warning signs and reduced tolerances above posted limits. And the money is rolling in to the state's coffers! On July 19, Police confirmed that a quarter of a million Queensland drivers have already been caught speeding this year, with a record total of one million fines forecast for 2015. There are now more than 3500 approved mobile speed camera sites across the state, and the Government has approved an extra \$16 million for additional speed cameras this year. On July 8, Police revealed that 314 motorists had been caught speeding in the Legacy Way tunnel in its first three days of operation. One person had been sent 6 infringements (one each way, twice a day), while 38 vehicles had received more than one infringement.

A recent article by Stephen Boyles, Assistant Professor of Transportation Engineering at the University of Texas, provides some thought provoking material on the subject. He advocates that artificially low speed limits actually make roads less safe, and that laws should not make people choose between what is legal and what is safe. Road conditions and vehicle safety have improved dramatically in recent years, yet motorists are still required to adhere to limits that now foster boredom, inattention and distracted driving. His view is that "most of us are perfectly capable of finding a safe speed to drive at even without a speed limit sign." To suggest anything less is to call into question the validity of the whole driver licensing system. The '85th percentile' concept is finding increasing support in proponents for change - this is to say that only about 1 out of 7 cars should be driving faster than the speed limit. Any more than that and the speed limit should be raised. Or as someone else put it "the normally careful and competent actions of a reasonable person should be considered legal." In summary, he adds "speed limits should conform to drivers, not the other way around." Read the full article at :

<http://news.utexas.edu/2015/07/02/roads-are-better-cars-are-safer-raise-the-speed-limit>

While the trend of increasing speed infringements appears to have no end in sight, technological improvements just on the horizon have given authorities cause for longer-term hope. The answer, they see, is to take the decision process out of the hands of the driver. Welcome to the brave new world of autonomous driving, or driverless vehicles. Before 2000, estimates for self-driving cars ranged from 'never' to 'maybe in our lifetime.' Now, in 2015, many companies are working towards the target with many prototypes logging considerable distances. 2020 is now seen as a realistic target for commercial sales. BMW, Mercedes, Audi, Ford and many others see this as the future. You have no choice but to comply in this world - you are only a passenger. Driver's licenses will be a thing of the past. And it's not just car makers either - Google is investing large amounts into its project. Sonar devices, stereo cameras, lasers and radar are all necessary to replicate the human brain. Object detection is the key, and the many test miles are all about programming the real-world experiences into the software. How serious? Watch this :

[http://www.ted.com/talks/chris\\_urmson\\_how\\_a\\_driverless\\_car\\_sees\\_the\\_road](http://www.ted.com/talks/chris_urmson_how_a_driverless_car_sees_the_road)

Will this be the end of speeding?



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