

SPEED LIMIT MYTHS - BUSTED

Myth 8: “Speed limits are all about revenue raising” – BUSTED

Speed limits are set in accordance with Victorian Speed Zoning Guidelines which are developed and applied by road safety experts and traffic authorities. They are based on international evidence-based best practice, engineering standards and guidance, state legislation and government policy.

Key factors considered in setting speed limits on a particular road or area include: crash history, road and roadside characteristics, road function and use, and the presence of vulnerable users. All of these factors are based on road safety risk but still consider the need of people to make journeys.

So, speed limits are set based on engineering and safety considerations.



Speed limits in and of themselves do not ‘raise revenue’. Speed limit enforcement does result in revenue for the public purse. However, the enforcement of speed limits is driven by the following factors:

- Speed limit enforcement reduces the incidence of excessive and unsafe speeds
- Lower speeds reduce road trauma [See Myth 2]
- Therefore, speed limit enforcement reduces road trauma

Cochrane’s 2010 global review of research studies titled, “Do speed cameras reduce road traffic crashes, injuries and deaths” concluded that:

- A reduction in the proportion of speeding vehicles for most countries falling between 10-35%
- A reduction in fatal and serious injury crashes of between 11-44% local to the cameras and even higher over wider areas

Further evidence that speed cameras are used to target safety, as opposed to revenue raising, include:

- Locations for fixed and mobile speed cameras are chosen based on a number of factors including: crash history, a demonstrated crash risk and areas with excessive speeding
- Fixed camera locations are made public because the aim is to prevent speeding, not to catch people speeding

Camera enforcement revenue is directed to the Better Roads Victoria Trust Account and invested in road safety improvements. Revenues represent only a tiny fraction of the overall cost of speed related crashes.

The Victorian Auditor-General’s 2006 report ‘Making Travel Safer: Victoria’s speed enforcement program’ found no evidence that the speed enforcement program was focused on raising revenue. It went on to say that ‘speed cameras are used at sites and times that match identified speed risks and crash histories’.