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## PETER MOORE **OPINION**

Provocative and forthright

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# Speeding debate needs sanity The fast lane to revenue

IT must be that time of the year again. News is, if not anything else, just as cyclical as the seasons.

Already we have had in the *Addy* (GA, September 25), Robert Hill, the Assistant Commissioner Road Policing, getting in early with his bon mots on speeding and extra police surveillance over October.

As usual he says the concentration on speeding is all about saving lives, not as the more cynical among us may think, it's all about increasing the revenue take from the poor old motorist.

This year, as predictably as night follows day, is no different to any other year as we anguish over, analyse and chip in our two bob's worth over why people continue to kill themselves and others on the roads.

We dissect the issue endlessly each summer with particular emphasis on the young who account for a disproportionate percentage of those killed or injured. Is it speed, inexperience, carelessness, drugs or alcohol or succumbing to peer pressure when encouraged to "go faster" or "overtake

them"? Each year a new family is devastated when a son or daughter is killed.

Each year new and impromptu roadside memorials are set up and each year the message is failed to be read or lessons learned.

At some time some sanity must be introduced into the debate.

First of all there are precious few "accidents", an accident being commonly defined as any event caused through an undesirable or unfortunate happening that occurs unintentionally and usually results in harm, injury, damage, or loss; casualty; mishap: Traffic incidents are always caused by something that the driver did or failed to do, by inexperience, making the wrong decision or blatantly disregarding traffic laws or the laws of plain old commonsense.

We have an unhealthy preoccupation with speed and speeding and by this I don't mean we all want to drive fast but rather that the authorities concentrate too much on this as a factor to the detriment of other





factors. I have written many times on how I consider the preoccupation with speed limits to be the easy way out for a problem that is much broader and far less simplistic than “if everyone travelled at the correct speed limit then incidents would be removed”.

Not even they believe that. A young driver who runs off the road at 150km/h would have done so whatever the limit, sad but true.

Assistant Commissioner Robert Hill is merely trotting out the standard line to justify hidden police cars nabbing motorists as they stray three or four km/h over the stated limit.

I’m delighted to say that the readers’ comments would have left the good Assistant Commissioner in little doubt as to how the public feel about his trite, disingenuous, inaccurate and misleading comments.

Rob of Bellarine commented, with just a hint of the Pauline Hanson: “Would be helpful if you (Robert Hill) referenced your ‘research’ figures on low level speed reduction. Low level speed reduction statistics from Europe and the UK do NOT agree with your assertions. Please explain !”.

Luke Holman posted: “What a joke, how about enforcing some other traffic matters like morons who can’t keep left,

who tailgate, don’t indicate, cars with one headlight or brake light. The public are sick of being fed this garbage to justify penalising everyday motorists who stray a couple of ks over the limit by doing the right thing and that is watching the road and not their speedo.”

“Give us a break VicPol, go do something that constitutes real police work and not hiding in some bushes to ambush innocent folks.”

I like the word disconnect and this attempt to justify by a causal relationship revenue raising, speed limits and road deaths by the police and the TAC displays all the classic signs of a total disconnect.

These authorities and the State Government should just come out and say, “We need more tax money and this is the easiest way we can think of to get it.” At the moment the average motorist and these authorities are not even reading the same book let alone on the same page.

Drivers make mistakes all the time, fortunately relatively few resulting in a fatality but as the TAC’s own figures prove it has little to do with exceeding the stated speed limits.

Often their definition of speeding is going too fast in inappropriate conditions as opposed to actually exceeding the official limit.



CLICK: The police are getting in early with warnings of extra police surveillance in October.