



8 September 2011

C62, 79.9

RB;rp

Mr Mark Goldsworthy MP
Shadow Minister for Road Safety
Parliament House
North Terrace
ADELAIDE SA 5000

Dear Shadow Minister

Road Traffic (Red Light Offences) Amendment Bill 2011

I refer to an email received from your Electorate Assistant, Ms Keen, on 6 September 2011, inviting the Society to provide you with its comments in relation to the above Bill.

The Society has concerns that this Bill is no more than a revenue raiser, rather than a road safety measure. We note that the Road Safety Minister announced on 27 July 2011 that red light cameras will be installed at six level crossings across the suburban rail network over the next year. At this stage we are not aware of any red light cameras operating on level crossings.

The Minister's circular to Members of Parliament on the proposed Bill states that the Bill is designed to ensure that drivers who are exceeding the speed limit when going through a level crossing whilst warning lights are flashing receive the "double penalty" for the two offences arising from the same incident. This is the situation that currently applies at road traffic lights.

The statistics supplied contain results of a DTEI study at the Womma Road Crossing for the period 7 November 2009 – 24 November 2009. During that period, between 10-12 per cent of vehicles entering the crossing were detected over the speed limit. This is obviously a cause for concern but we do not know what the general average across the metropolitan area may well be.

However, the figures show that once the flashing lights were activated, the number of vehicles entering the crossing that exceeded the speed limit were between 0.1 per cent and 0.2 per cent.

The statistics also report that for the period 1 January 2001 to 31 December 2010 there were 85 road vehicle collisions at level crossings in South Australia. However, since July 2008, there have only been six. The statistics do not show whether the level crossings were in the city or country or how they were controlled. During the same time, there were 4 fatalities and 6 serious injuries. The statistics do not reveal whether any of these were suicides, although there is a note in the background report to the effect that the coroner was investigating at least one of these incidents.

It appears to us that there is in fact no justification for installing red light cameras at level crossings and that this is yet just another revenue raiser. This Bill, whilst we recognise it seeks to bring the regulation of offences committed at level crossings line with what occurs at road intersections, is obviously also framed with the intent of supporting the Government's decision to bring in red light cameras at level crossings.

In passing, we note that there is an error in the first table provided, where the item entitled "fatal and serious personal injuries" should in fact read "fatal injuries".

Thank you for providing us with the opportunity to consider this matter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ralph Bönig". The signature is stylized with a vertical line on the left and several loops and strokes on the right.

Ralph Bönig
PRESIDENT