

MEDIA RELEASE

**Eric Roozendaal
Minister for Roads**



SUNDAY, MAY 21, 2006

MAJOR NSW SCHOOL ROAD SAFETY PACKAGE

Safety at school zones across NSW will be upgraded with state-of-the-art technology and new education programs in a major school student safety initiative, Roads Minister Eric Roozendaal announced today.

The five-point plan includes:

- ▶ Electronic school safety alert systems, incorporating flashing 40km/h signs and lights, will be developed and rolled out across NSW, with the first 100 to be fast-tracked
- ▶ A combination of 50 fixed and mobile speed cameras will be installed and rotated between all NSW school zones – operating only in school zone hours
- ▶ Increased fines and demerit points for driving offences in school zones
- ▶ A 'Drop-off-and-go, Pick-up-and-go' system will allow parents to become more involved in student safety and ease congestion around participating schools
- ▶ A School Child Safety Roundtable will address further initiatives raised by parents, schools, community groups and the Roads and Traffic Authority.

"This is a comprehensive package which will improve the safety of our children around NSW schools," Mr Roozendaal said.

The plan follows the *Evaluation of Flashing Lights in 40km/h School Speed Zones* report.

1. High visibility warning display system

The RTA will immediately call for expressions of interest to develop a **new electronic school safety alert system**, incorporating state-of-the-art features such as **flashing lights and flashing signs**. The warning system, which must be highly visible, could also include other features like electronic variable message signs and a back-to-base component to report faults.

Mr Roozendaal said the trial of flashing lights at 43 schools had found the existing technology could reduce speeds but was unreliable.

"We can do better than the flashing lights that were trialed – we need to put in place better and more effective technology," Mr Roozendaal said.

"My goal is to have the latest technology as soon as possible. This is not a trial, this technology will roll out across the State on a needs basis, based on expert advice and safety criteria.

"Unlike the Opposition, I will not waste millions of dollars on an existing unreliable approach."

The *Evaluation of Flashing Lights in 40km/h School Speed Zones* report found:

- Flashing lights were effective in reducing vehicle speed outside schools during the operation of the 40 km/h speed zone
- That small but significant speed reductions of between 3 km/h and 5 km/h could be expected at certain sites fitted with flashing light signs compared with conventional signage
- However, the operational performance of flashing light units was considered to be poor. This occurred despite trialling three different styles of flashing lights with independent providers. On average each site recorded two faults in the 18 month period.

“The message from the evaluation is that while speed reductions have been achieved, the existing flashing light technology is unreliable,” Mr Roozendaal said.

2. School safety speed cameras

Fifty speed cameras, including mobile cameras to be rotated between school zones, will be commissioned.

A mixture of fixed and mobile cameras will covertly monitor school zones in consultation with police.

The cameras will **only operate in school zone hours** and all revenue from them will be put straight back into road safety projects.

The safety alert systems could also be fitted to house speed cameras.

“There will be no excuse for speeding through school zones – signs at every school zone will warn motorists that speed cameras operate in school zones,” Mr Roozendaal said.

“Any school zone could have a camera in it.

“When it comes to school zones there is no excuse for reckless behaviour of any kind.

“I know the public don’t like speed cameras but this school zone speeding has to stop.

“These are tough measures but we are talking about the safety of our children.”

3. Increased fines and demerit points

Penalties for driving offences in school zones will also increase.

New regulations are currently being drafted and include motorists losing an additional demerit point for all driving offences committed in school zones during school zone operating hours.

Fines will also increase one level. *[See attached fact sheet]*

4. Drop-off-and-go, Pick-up-and-go

Mr Roozendaal said it was important to embrace parents’ and school communities’ enthusiasm to educate children about road safety.

The **'Drop-off-and-go, Pick-up-and-go'** parking and marshalling system will be offered to schools across NSW.

Under the system, which already operates in several NSW schools, parents volunteer on a tuck-shop style roster to greet students arriving at school in cars, open doors and marshal them safely through the school gates.

"This system saves parents the trouble of finding parking, clogging local roads and walking their children to the gate," Mr Roozendaal said.

"Parents can simply drop off their kids in an orderly way and be reassured a parent will be there to escort them into the school.

"I know a number of schools have a system like this in place that works well.

"We all have an interest in improving school zone safety."

5. School Safety Roundtable

A new **School Child Safety Roundtable** will meet on June 21 to discuss further school child safety measures, including a second category of accredited 'lollipop people'.

The roundtable will also look at whether school zone hours should be increased because children are spending longer at school sites in before and after school day care.

"I want to ensure adequate consultation moving forward," Mr Roozendaal said.

"I want all interested and relevant parties to be fully briefed on the measures being put in place today, and we need a broader public debate."

The roundtable will consider and make recommendations on:

- Changes to employment arrangements for 'lollipop' pedestrian supervisors, including a possible second tier of accreditation to allow parents and community members to volunteer on a roster as crossing helpers
- The 'Drop-off-and-go, Pick-up-and-go' program
- Child safety **outside** school zones, including alighting from buses, riding bicycles and playing in driveways
- Driver and child education programs
- The issue of child restraints in cars.

Mr Roozendaal said the NSW Government is determined to do all it can in partnership with schools, parents and motorists to improve the road safety of our children.

A major advertising campaign for lollipop people will be launched this week in metropolitan, regional and suburban newspapers to fill existing vacancies.

The RTA will contract a skills hire firm to help fill vacancies faster when positions become vacant.

"We must always be looking to make further improvements," Mr Roozendaal said.

"And we must always be mindful that small children are at risk because of their size and the fact they can be easily distracted and act unpredictably."

Note:

- *Footage of artist's impression of new warning system design and overlay footage of 'Drop-off-and-go, Pick-up-and-go' is available*
- *The reports into flashing lights in 40km/h school zones and school zone speed cameras are also available at www.rta.nsw.gov.au*

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FACT SHEET

DROP-OFF-AND-GO, PICK-UP-AND-GO

What is Drop-off-and-go, Pick-up-and-go?

- This program will encourage parents to volunteer their time on a tuck-shop style roster to greet students arriving or leaving school in cars
- The volunteer opens car doors and marshals the students safely through the school gates
- The program will allow schools to make efficient use of their 'drop off and pick up' areas during very busy times at the beginning and end of the school day
- The driver pulls into the kerb and remains in control of the vehicle while an identified supervising adult from the school community assists the school student/s to exit or enter the vehicle.

What school communities need to consider

- Consulting with the local council to consider whether the traffic environment outside the school would support the program without disrupting traffic flow
- Consider existing school access points and school entry and exit procedures
- Develop a system for matching the child to the correct vehicle at pick up times
- Develop a roster of those adults approved by the school community to supervise students as they exit or enter a vehicle
- Communicate details of the program's operation and safety procedures to drivers, students, supervising adult/s and the general school community.

As part of the program, both parents and students learn more about road safety, including:

- Making sure children use the footpath-side door when getting in and out of a car
- Never double parking
- Never parking across a pedestrian crossing
- Never doing a U-turn in close proximity to a school
- Stay 'buckled up' until the vehicle has stopped in the drop off and pick up area
- Making sure children always get in and out of the vehicle through the 'safety door' – the rear footpath-side door.

FACT SHEET

NSW SCHOOL STUDENT SAFETY

- More than one million children travel to and from school each day
- The casualty rates (injuries and fatalities) of school children have reduced for both school and non-school travel time in the last decade
- Children are more likely be injured as pedestrians and cyclists between the times of 4pm and 6pm
- Children may not necessarily be involved in school travel during these periods, for example they may have gone home and gone out again to play or cycle
- They are more likely to be injured away from school zones, closer to their homes
- Incorrectly fitted seat belts and child restraints is a major cause of injury and death to NSW children aged 0 to 4 years.
- Between 2003 and 2005, badly fitted belts and restraints contributed to 33 per cent of child deaths and 37 per cent of injuries, where the child was a passenger in a vehicle.

FACT SHEET

TOUGHER PENALTIES FOR SCHOOL ZONE OFFENCES

Irresponsible motorists who speed through school zones face tougher fines and increased demerit points.

For the first time, double parking and stopping in a bus zone will attract two demerit points and an increase in fines from \$175 to \$225.

These new fines specifically target motorists breaking road rules in school zones during school zone operating hours.

Motorists who commit any driving offence in NSW school zones while a zone is in operation will have an additional demerit point added to their driver's licence.

The following fines will apply in school zones during school zone hours:

Offence	Current Demerit	New Demerit	Current Fine	New Fine
Double Parking	0	2	\$175	\$225
Stopping in a bus zone	0	2	\$175	\$225
Parking/stopping at a pedestrian crossing, children's crossing or marked foot crossing	1	2	\$225	\$225

Fines will increase by one level for offences committed in a school zone during school zone hours – 8am to 9.30am and 2.30pm to 4pm.

A \$75 fine will increase to \$125, \$175 to \$225, \$225 to \$300 and a \$300 fine goes up to \$375.

Demerit offences committed in school zones during school zone operating hours will all attract one extra demerit point. This includes:

Offence	Current demerit	New demerit	Current fine	New fine
Make U-turn without giving way to vehicle/pedestrian	3	4	\$225	\$300
Using mobile phone	3	4	\$225	\$300
Fail to give way to pedestrian at crossing	3	4	\$300	\$375
Not reversing safely	2	3	\$125	\$175