

## TRAFFIC LAW OBSERVANCE STUDY

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**ABSTRACT:** *Planning Workshop Pty Ltd was commissioned by the Traffic Authority of New South Wales to undertake an investigation of the effects penalties and other deterrents have on drivers in respect to the observance of traffic laws. After a lengthy literature review, a questionnaire was designed to ascertain the socio-economic and behavioural factors which influence a driver to obey traffic laws. Of the 9 525 surveys distributed, 2 808 completed surveys were returned, the 30 per cent expected return rate for mailback questionnaires.*

*The findings of the survey are briefly reported in the paper, which takes as its basis the summary document prepared for the Traffic Authority. A technical report is available from them if specific data are required. A few significant findings were that traffic offences are viewed by the driver as independent problems, not items that can be grouped under headings like 'parking' or 'obstructing traffic' and handled in a general fashion. Also a driver's perception of the risk of detection was directly and positively correlated to his perceived seriousness of the offence.*

*Driver behaviour is just one aspect of the traffic system. Obviously, a comprehensive and co-ordinated approach from drivers, traffic engineers, planners and enforcement agencies - among other users of the system - is required to achieve improved traffic law observance. The results of this survey can assist in identifying the aspects of driver behaviour that can be most effectively modified.*

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### INTRODUCTION

#### Study Terms of Reference

Planning Workshop Pty Ltd was commissioned by the Traffic Authority of New South Wales to undertake an investigation titled 'Traffic Law Observance: Influence of Penalties and Other Deterrents'. The overall purpose of the study was to design a methodology that would provide information on motivational, attitudinal and psychological factors that influence road user behaviour. By obtaining insights into these questions, it was hypothesised that observance and enforcement of traffic laws would be facilitated by the introduction of enforcement procedures that would increase an individual's sensitivity and subjective risk of being detected, prosecuted and penalised.

The model of the Traffic Law Observance System in this report includes three interactive segments:

- The Enforcement System (legislation, courts, penalties).
- The Traffic System (design, flow, safety).
- Road User System (driver skill and attitudes).

Investigations concerned only the last segment and indications were drawn from that research of where actions of the other segments could directly influence driver behaviour. Refer to the Directions for Strategy Development at the end of this report. Clearly though, a much wider and co-ordinated effort would be needed involving the agencies of the other two systems in order to draw up specific, integrated and effective procedures for Traffic Law Enforcement.

The original report contains many tables of results, analysis of subgroup differences, and aggregation of scaled variables to see if driver behaviour can be best explained in grouped traffic law categories. (Statistical significance tests were applied to the data as part of the analytical process). Due to the constraints of space, only brief summaries can be presented here. Further technical information can be obtained through Planning Workshop or the NSW Traffic Authority.

#### Previous Research

Research on Traffic Law Observance within Australia has been extremely limited. In 1974, OECD made a significant contribution to this area of investigation by preparing a detailed and thorough literature review of the effects of enforcement of legislation on road user behaviour and traffic accidents. In addition to this review, the OECD Road Research Group designed questionnaires that were distributed to Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, United Kingdom and United States. The results of the survey provided a description of the traffic accident problem and traffic enforcement procedures. However, no substantive evaluation of enforcement techniques has been undertaken.

Essentially, while a number of overseas investigations have been undertaken, the direct application of the results to the Australian situation has to be viewed with some caution. Rarely is the road user the main unit of enquiry. Rather than attempting to investigate driver motivations, attitudes, experience, offences and accidents, these studies have focused on the techniques of enforcement and its effect on road behaviour, for example, reduction in speed. Very few Australian studies have been reported, and consequently Australian literature on the subject is extremely limited.

At present the law enforcement techniques employed are a series of measures not inherently related to each other or based on behavioural research that would allow their effectiveness to be evaluated. The focus of this research was to examine the road user segment of the traffic system and identify any apparent areas where changing the enforcement procedures could improve the rate of public adherence to traffic laws, or, at what level of penalty or persuasion do people alter their risk-taking attitudes towards law breaking.

Much research has been done on law enforcement techniques, i.e. does introducing parked or moving police patrols have a greater deterrent on speeding? These reports have great problems with experimental design, however, so results tell little that can be generally applied. NSW will face a similar problem in evaluating its random breath testing program - what other factors changed aggregate accident statistics, will behaviour change as media attention falls off, and does the experimental nature of the program effect public awareness?

The 1974 OECD report on "Research on Traffic Law Enforcement" concluded that its member countries should do more serious work into the road user, his motives to offend or act unsafely. The increase in offences and accidents and the changes in driver behaviour when police surveillance is visible tend to suggest that both knowledge (skill) (Road Research Laboratory 1967; Sheppard 1968) and attitudes substantially affect driver behaviour (Hand and Hills 1967). As such, literature suggests that positive work could be conducted into road user:

- personal characteristics - age, sex, income, car ownership;
- knowledge of rules and penalties;
- skill, i.e. driving experience and previous driving records;
- attitudes to various types of offences;
- attitudes to various types of enforcement procedures - visible versus concealed;
- attitudes to various types of penalties;
- motives for committing various offences and attitudes to conditions under which traffic laws would not need to be observed;
- perceived and subjective risk of detection, prosecution and penalisation.

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Many of these aspects would need to be analysed on a category of offence basis, since it would be expected that attitudes and motivations would vary according to the severity of the offence.

The Transport and Road Research Laboratory in 1977 conducted "A Study of Male Motorists' Attitudes to Speed Restrictions and Their Enforcement" (Hogg 1977). This investigation very much followed the concepts developed by the OECD group. The main findings were:

- Speeding offences were classed as relatively less serious and less likely to cause accidents than some offences covering the mechanical condition.
- Ambivalent attitudes to speed limits, particularly with the 30 mph and 70 mph limits.
- No statistically significant differences related to previous driving record, age and social class.
- Resentment to use of speed meter detection units to apprehend offenders.
- Lack of knowledge on speed restrictions.
- Lack of knowledge of penalties further diminishes the deterrent effects of penalties.
- Subjective risk did not vary with past driving offence record. Actually having been caught for an offence did not seem to heighten subjective risk.

The Transport and Road Research Laboratory investigation represents an emergence of an awareness among traffic and transport agencies of the need to develop enforcement procedures that are underpinned by sound quantitative psychological research which can be utilised in developing an effective and enforceable traffic law observance.

### RESEARCH DESIGN

#### Existing Data

A review of data available from sources other than the police or the courts reveals very little systematic collection of key items such as driver skill, violation rates, and accident rates associated with different offence types. Furthermore, there has been little attempt to integrate existing bodies of data to investigate the relationships between them, for example between offence rates and primary driver attributes. Information on the age and sex of all drivers currently holding a New South Wales licence is available from the Department of Motor Transport on a quarterly basis. Apart from age and sex, many other driver attributes may be useful in explaining levels of traffic law observance or the effects of deterrents on particular groups of drivers.

Such attributes include:

- occupation, especially if this occupation involves regular driving, e.g. taxi drivers, travelling sales representatives, van drivers;
- income, preferably measured in terms of disposable income;
- place of residence, particularly in relation to frequency of use of special traffic control measures and exposure to heavy traffic conditions;
- car availability, as measured by frequency of regular access on weekdays and weekends;
- educational level and other indicators of advanced training;
- behavioural parameters such as miles driven per annum, membership of motoring organisations, etc.

Data on driving experience is collected by the Traffic Accident Research Unit but only in relation to those drivers who have been involved in a traffic accident.

Knowledge of traffic rules, enforcement procedures and penalties are key determinants of a driver's likelihood of breaking traffic laws, but no data seems to be available on the levels of such knowledge. With regard to new traffic rules introduced from time to time, there appears to be no monitoring of information levels for these rules in situations where a before-and-after comparison could indicate the spread of knowledge among different groups of drivers over time.

Two of the key variables which need to be closely investigated in order to predict the likely effect of strategies to increase traffic law observance are the frequency with which drivers actually break traffic rules (without necessarily being detected) and the frequency with which they are actually detected (without necessarily being convicted).

Some data, however, is available which allows the estimation of detection rates, although this can only be done at an aggregate level with disaggregation into driver age and sex groups. Table I shows the approximate number of offences per annum in New South Wales in three offence groups, viz. speeding, negligent driving and other offences. It appears that more detailed figures on an individual offence basis are not readily available.

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Table 1: Court Convictions and Traffic Infringement Penalty Payments 1972 to 1977

| Nature of Offence  | 1972/73        | 1973/74        | 1974/75        | 1975/76        | 1976/77        |
|--------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Exceed speed limit | 142,000        | 149,000        | 165,000        | 175,000        | 176,000        |
| Negligent driving  | 39,000         | 43,000         | 43,000         | 31,000         | 26,000         |
| Other offence      | 89,000         | 96,000         | 93,000         | 81,000         | 98,000         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>       | <b>270,000</b> | <b>288,000</b> | <b>302,000</b> | <b>287,000</b> | <b>300,000</b> |

Source: Department of Motor Transport

The best way to explain variations in detection rates would involve consideration of changing levels of enforcement for particular offences. The calculation of these enforcement levels is a difficult process, since it involves the collection of a large amount of data on the distribution of police patrol time and areal coverage, the placing of radar traps, the ratio of cars and patrol vehicles on the road, and so on. There appears to have been no attempt to calculate such enforcement levels.

Although much useful data on offences, and related driver attributes, is not readily available, more attention has been paid to those offences and driver actions involving accidents and injury. This is the work of the Traffic Accident Research Unit within the Department of Motor Transport. Particulars of traffic accidents are gathered and integrated in a data file. This allows the interrelationships between accident characteristics, driver attributes and 'environmental factors' to be examined. It must be remembered, however, that data is only collected for offences or actions which involve an accident, and that not all accidents necessarily result from an offence or lead to legal action or conviction.

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Table 2: Age of Drivers Involved in Accidents (1976-77)

| Age               | Male   |       | Female |       |
|-------------------|--------|-------|--------|-------|
|                   | No.    | %     | No.    | %     |
| Under 20 years    | 7,279  | 13.7  | 1,568  | 11.0  |
| 20 to 24 years    | 10,375 | 19.5  | 2,816  | 19.8  |
| 25 to 29 years    | 7,985  | 15.0  | 2,238  | 15.8  |
| 30 to 39 years    | 10,699 | 20.1  | 3,195  | 22.5  |
| 40 to 49 years    | 7,268  | 13.6  | 2,055  | 14.5  |
| 50 to 59 years    | 5,594  | 10.5  | 1,449  | 10.2  |
| 60 to 69 years    | 2,603  | 4.9   | 559    | 3.9   |
| 70 years and over | 798    | 1.5   | 169    | 1.2   |
| TOTAL             | 53,309 | 100.0 | 14,193 | 100.0 |

Source: Traffic Accident Research Unit

The primary driver attributes of age and sex are both significantly related to accident rates.

Drivers under 25 are involved in about 33% of accidents while they comprise less than 20% of licenced drivers. Male drivers comprise 60% of licenced drivers but are involved in 78% of accidents. Cross-tabulation of sex and age by reported driving experience, as supplied by the Traffic Accident Research Unit, suggest experience is positively related to age and sex only in respect of the period of time for which they have been licenced, and not necessarily related to annual figures on miles driven. Information is limiting, however, and very little can be done to test inter-relationships such as the inference above without consistent driver records and monitoring.

Broad Aims of the Research

Reflecting the broad directions given in the study submission and subsequent discussions with relevant personnel in the Traffic Authority and Traffic Accident Research Unit, the broad aims were:

- To examine the perceptions of a representative sample of drivers with regard to recognised factors affecting levels of individual traffic law observance.
- To examine differences between the perceptions of sub-groups of drivers identified on the basis of sample stratification criteria (location of workplace), personal attributes (including self-perceptions of driving skill and knowledge) and behavioural attributes (including offence and accident records).

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- To discover whether key driver perceptions can be reliably predicted on the basis of driver attributes (both observable and more indirectly accessible).
- To devise strategy options for increased traffic law observance based on aggregate driver reactions and responses and relevant inter-group differences.
- To identify particular problems and limitations of this type of research, and make suggestions for further research reaching into the traffic and enforcement systems.

### Main Types of Data Collected and Sampling Procedure

Six main types of data were designed to be collected via the questionnaire and the associated sampling procedure. These were:

- Sample characteristics, i.e. the particular attributes of those drivers purposely sampled at a range of different sample destinations.
- Personal attributes of drivers hypothetically related to driving or traffic law observance.
- Behavioural attributes of drivers related to driving behaviour, or surrogate measures of such behaviour.
- Self-perceptions of drivers relating to their driving skill, knowledge, and reactions to common driving experiences.
- Attitudes of drivers to traffic laws, enforcement procedures, traffic offences, penalties, effectiveness of incentives and deterrents.
- Driver perceptions of the risks associated with traffic offences and the levels of fines required to prevent these offences.

In addition to these types of data, other questionnaire items were designed to elicit unstructured driver attitudes, opinions and perceptions to aid in the interpretation of more structured and fundamental types of data.

It was envisaged that the sample selection procedure would involve a design with seven different types of locations being selected, each with an inner-city and an outer suburban location. However, this was not possible due to problems in contacting suitable locations where questionnaires could be delivered and administered. Also a hospital was included to elicit responses of givers and receivers of health care. The final locations were:

- Two outer suburban office locations, one in the private sector and one private motoring organisation.
- Two public sector city centre office locations.
- Three private sector city centre office locations.

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- . Three inner-city manufacturing locations.
- . Two inner-city tertiary educational institutions.
- . One outer suburban tertiary educational institution.
- . One northern suburb large shopping complex location.
- . One outer suburban south-western shopping complex location.
- . One suburban public sector motoring organisation location.
- . Two inner-city on-street parking locations.
- . Two inner-city parking station locations.
- . One public hospital location.
- . Two outer suburban manufacturing locations.
- . One inner-city private motoring organisation location.

It was decided to distribute questionnaires at relevant sample destinations and to collect completed questionnaires either through a mail-back procedure or by collecting them directly using collection boxes and pre-arranged pick-up times. The initial estimate for an adequate number of completed questionnaires was 1,400 to 1,500 which would allow the comparison of responses across sample groups using appropriate statistical techniques.

The numbers of questionnaires distributed at each location was determined based on the numbers of expected responses at each location. The total number of questionnaires distributed was 9,525 and the final number of completed questionnaires returned was 2,808. This represented an overall response rate of 29.5 per cent which was twice as great as the initial conservative estimate made with regard to the complexity and depth of the questionnaire. The minimum response rate for any sample group was 14.5 per cent indicating that at virtually all sample locations a sufficient proportion of potential respondents was able to complete a questionnaire, and interested enough to return it within two or three weeks of distribution.

### SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESULTS AND ANALYSES

#### Perceived Main Reasons for Inefficient Traffic Flow Do Not Emphasise Non-Observance of Traffic Laws

In order to assess respondents initial reactions to existing traffic law observance patterns and enforcement procedures two open-ended questions at the beginning of the questionnaire asked:

- . the main reasons for slow moving traffic and traffic jams,
- . the reasons why people do not always obey traffic rules and regulations.

These questions were asked to detect initial reactions uncontaminated by

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responses to later questions. Also to detect spontaneous reactions which might indicate respondents prior orientation to the whole question of traffic law observance as an aid to interpretation of the more structured sections of the questionnaire.

The main reasons for slow moving traffic and traffic jams were not perceived to be the breaking of traffic laws or lack of law enforcement procedures. Only 12% of respondents mentioned the breaking of specific traffic laws and a further 2% mentioned a general breaking of laws as the main reason. Even smaller numbers of respondents mentioned a lack of law enforcement procedures and most of these did so in conjunction with the breaking of traffic laws.

The most prominent responses were parking problems (16%), unco-ordinated lights (15%), need for more expressways (9%) and need for staggered work hours and car pool (6%). While respondents at locations likely to interview more highly educated drivers were readier to blame law breaking, the trend was not significant. Hence it is reasonable to assume that respondents don't think unlawful actions are much to blame for traffic delays.

### Perceived Reasons for Disobeying Traffic Laws Not Related to Lack of Driver Knowledge or Enforcement Procedures

When asked why drivers do not always obey traffic laws, only 16% mentioned either a general or specific lack of knowledge on the part of drivers, while only 2% mentioned a lack of law enforcement procedures. Another 8.1% mentioned both lack of knowledge and lack of enforcement. These findings suggest that when people think about why traffic laws are being broken, most do not immediately think of poor driver knowledge of the laws, or of a general feeling that the means of apprehending the law-breakers are inadequate.

Some sample group response differentiation was evident with respondents sampled at manufacturing establishments attributing more traffic law non-observance to a lack of knowledge, perhaps reflecting the lower educational levels of these respondents. Again, detailed interpretation of sample group differences is not warranted given the low frequencies in many table cells and the unstructured nature of the responses.

Many respondents mentioned specific reasons why drivers might disobey traffic laws in particular situations, although 36% attributed non-observance of the laws to general "human failings" such as stupidity, aggressiveness, lack of consideration. A specific problem area appeared to be the delays experienced at STOP and GIVE WAY signs, the bad placing of these signs, and the lack of enforcement of the corresponding give-way regulations. Inadequate parking near clearways and other clearway related problems also produced significant spontaneous responses, as did bad driver education. It is significant that only 1% of respondents spontaneously mentioned that existing penalties were not severe enough to deter people from breaking traffic laws.

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SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF SAMPLE

Sample Over-Representative for Younger Age Groups and Male Drivers

Table 3 shows an age structure profile of respondents in comparison to a similar profile for all motor vehicle licensees in New South Wales (the profiles are not completely comparable due to discrepancies in the age group boundaries which differ by one year for some groups). It can be seen that the sample is significantly younger than the state's total licenced population.

Table 3: Respondents Age Compared to Licenced Drivers

|                | NSW Licencees*<br>N=2, 551, 873 |      | Sample N=2791 |       |      |
|----------------|---------------------------------|------|---------------|-------|------|
|                | No.                             | %    | No.           | %     |      |
| Under 21 years | 226,480                         | 8.9  | 378           | 13.6  |      |
| 21-25 years    | 269,550                         | 10.6 | 580           | 20.8  |      |
| 26-30 years    | 354,753                         | 13.9 | 452           | 16.2  |      |
| 31-35 years    |                                 |      | 337           | 12.1  |      |
| 36-40 years    | 597,685                         | 23.4 | 249           | 8.9   | 21.0 |
| 41-45 years    |                                 |      | 223           | 8.0   |      |
| 46-50 years    | 438,443                         | 17.2 | 190           | 6.8   | 14.8 |
| 51-55 years    |                                 |      | 195           | 7.0   |      |
| 56-60 years    | 368,584                         | 14.4 | 109           | 3.9   | 10.9 |
| 61-65 years    |                                 |      | 56            | 2.0   |      |
| Over 65 years  | 296,378                         | 11.6 | 19            | 0.7   | 2.7  |
| TOTAL          |                                 |      | 2791          | 100.0 |      |

Source: NSW Department of Motor Transport

The sex composition of the sample was strongly oriented to male drivers (73%) in comparison to the composition of the total population of licenced drivers in the state (60.2% males). This over-representation is again probably due to the predominance of male drivers at some of the sample destination points, and also to motivational factors. Sex composition differed markedly between the sample locations with the city office, parking and manufacturing locations more male-oriented and the educational, shopping, hospital and motoring organisation locations being more female-oriented.

Although the sample is apparently biased towards younger drivers and male drivers, this is not a serious limitation on the usefulness of the survey results given the nature and aims of the study. The incidence of committing traffic offences and being caught breaking traffic laws is higher among younger drivers and male drivers such that the survey results are more likely to be derived from drivers who are more involved with non-observance of traffic laws. Since the study aims to discover attitudes to traffic law observance and enforcement procedure with a view to designing strategies to promote better observance of the laws, it is perhaps an advantage to have a sample biased towards those at which these strategies would mainly be aimed.

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### Strong Professional and White-Collar Occupation Representation in Sample

An occupation breakdown of the total sample shows a strong orientation towards professional and white-collar occupations with 17.5% in professional practice, 19% in administrative or management positions, and 29% in clerical occupations. Students accounted for a further 13.9% of the sample, while blue-collar workers accounted for less than 8%. Relatively few retired, unemployed or non-workforce respondents were sampled.

Although the strong occupational bias in the sample may be thought to have an undue negative effect on the reliability of the survey results and the degree to which they can be generalised to a wider population, this effect may be over-estimated since occupation would have less effect on attitudes to traffic law observance than actual driving behaviour. All respondents have a common characteristic of being car drivers using common roads and this factor is likely to over-ride any occupational effect. The bias, however, cannot be ignored and will need to be taken into account when devising strategy options.

### Income Distribution Skewed Towards Highest and Lowest Income Brackets

Although 23% of respondents had annual incomes in excess of \$15,000, another 47% earned less than \$10,000 which is close to the average income at that time. The income distribution is therefore somewhat skewed with just under 30% of respondents in the \$10,000 to \$15,000 middle income bracket. This distribution at least means that the very high and very low income groups of drivers in the community are well represented. These are the groups which become important when discussing the deterrent effects of penalties and fines.

### Educational Levels Indicate a Highly Educated Tertiary-Trained Sample

In terms of educational background, the sample showed high levels of educational achievement with 37% completing university or other tertiary training, another 28% completing some tertiary education, and only 9% failing to complete secondary education. The sample respondents would generally be able to understand the aims of the survey and the instructions on how to complete the questionnaire. Such highly educated drivers would be expected to have a good knowledge of the road rules and traffic laws and this expectation may be applied to later findings on perceived and actual levels of this knowledge.

### High Access to Company Cars Reflects Occupational Structure of Sample

Access to a company car is an important consideration in some situations where minor offences (eg. illegal parking) are committed when using one since in many cases the driver does not pay the resulting fine. Access to a company car was high with 12% of respondents having the use of one every day and another 8% having one at least once a week. As expected, access was higher for respondents sampled at non-inner city locations and city parking stations for older (but not retired) drivers and for those in professional, administrative and managerial occupations. Very few female drivers had access to a company car.

Table 4: Attitudes to Driver Reactions Indicating Aggression or Anxiety (In Percentages)

|  | Disagree<br>Strongly<br>% | Disagree<br>% | Not Sure<br>% | Agree<br>% | Agree<br>Strongly<br>% |
|--|---------------------------|---------------|---------------|------------|------------------------|
| When behind a slow driver I usually try to overtake as soon as possible                                      | 4                         | 19            | 7             | 60         | 10                     |
| If I see a lot of other drivers exceeding the speed limit I usually join the flow of traffic and do the same | 12                        | 37            | 9             | 38         | 5                      |
| When another driver cuts in in front of me I usually sound my horn   | 14                        | 44            | 11            | 24         | 6                      |
| I always try to anticipate the actions of other drivers  | 1                         | 2             | 4             | 45         | 48                     |
| I always slow down when I see a police car or motorcycle   | 3                         | 29            | 10            | 40         | 18                     |
| I never think about being caught when I break a traffic rule   | 22                        | 51            | 9             | 15         | 3                      |
| When I see someone else disobeying traffic signs and signals I usually think nothing of it                   | 31                        | 56            | 4             | 7          | 2                      |
| I never park unless I can find a safe and legal parking spot   | 3                         | 17            | 8             | 46         | 26                     |

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### Importance of Driver Self-Perceptions of Skill and Reactions to Law Breaking Situations

In addition to the above personal and behavioural characteristics of respondents a number of self-perception variables were collected with the aim of providing a clearer picture of how drivers themselves see their own behaviour and reactions in relation to different driving situations.

Respondents generally see themselves as most skilled when driving in off peak city traffic (41% above average), in peak hour city traffic (39%), parking in tight spaces (4%) and driving at high speed on open roads (32%). Less skill was perceived when driving unfamiliar cars (21% below average), in heavy rain or fog (17%) and in unfamiliar areas (14%). A significant overall result is that more drivers see themselves as above average skill than below (31% above average as opposed to 11% below). This could be a reflection of the high educational levels and high degree of driver training noted earlier, but it could indicate a general overestimation of driving skill among drivers.

Self perceived driving skill appears to vary more with the type of driver (in terms of personal and behavioural attributes) and less with particular driving situations. From the exhibited patterns of correlates of perceived skill it seems clear that sex is the most important personal attribute with males almost always seeing themselves as more skilful drivers than females. Apart from other attributes such as occupation, income and car availability, the other significant explaining variables are the behavioural attributes related to driving experience and advanced driver education. If driving skill is assumed to be an important factor in the formation of attitudes to traffic law enforcement procedures and corresponding fines and deterrents, then these attitudes should vary more with the type of driver than with the driving situations in which particular offences are more or less likely to be committed.

In terms of aggressive reactions to traffic determinations, a majority of respondents agreed that they would overtake a slow driver as soon as possible when caught behind one (see Table 4). These drivers tended to be younger male drivers with lower incomes and greater car availability and also had slightly more regular driving experience and advanced driver training. They also rated themselves as more skilled in all situations than other drivers. This type of reaction to a frustrating situation could lead to particular offences (eg. failing to give way when changing lanes) which would be more prevalent among the above types of drivers.

#### Other findings were:

- Seeing others break rules increases likelihood of individual breaking rules.
- Cautious or anxious reactions more common among less experienced and less skilled drivers.
- High level of awareness of consequences of breaking rules.

### Mass Media the Main Information Source About New Traffic Rules

Almost half of the respondents (47%) found out about new traffic rules through the mass media, while many (37%) found out through a number of information channels, which would again include the media.

Knowledge of Traffic Rules

The survey results indicate that self perceived knowledge of general groups of traffic rules and regulations differs between various groups of drivers in terms of their personal and behavioural attributes. Overall, very few people rated their knowledge generally as poor (3%), while a significant 31% saw their knowledge as very good or excellent. Speeding rules appeared to be the most well known (39% very good or excellent) followed by traffic light/intersection rules (34%), pedestrian rules (31.1%) and parking rules (21%). Clearway/transit lane rules appeared to be the least well understood (6.4% poor knowledge), although this would be expected given the limited distribution of clearways and transit lanes in the metropolitan area. For all types of rules, more than 50% of respondents rate their knowledge as better than adequate.

## In summary:

- Self perceived knowledge not necessarily a factor in observance of parking rules.
- Knowledge of intersection rules positively related to caution and awareness of traffic law non-observance.
- Knowledge of clearway and transit lane rules related to self-perceived skill and annoyance at the poor driving of others.
- Self perceived knowledge of speeding rules higher among younger males with greater access to a car.
- Pedestrian rule knowledge higher among those with lower incomes and educational levels.

The above findings may be summarised by saying that self perceived knowledge of particular groups of traffic rules is largely a function of similar driver attributes which are related to self perceived driving skill, although some notable exceptions were evident. The non linear relationships between level of self perceived knowledge and attitudes to driver reactions could indicate that those with more knowledge of the rules also have more strongly held opinions about the adequacy or desirability of the rules and about 'correct' or 'acceptable' driver reactions in situations where the rules are more likely to be broken, where they are broken and where the likelihood of being detected breaking a traffic law is higher. Drivers with less clear knowledge of the rules would be less likely to hold strong opinions and accept more of what happens on the road around them.

Perceived Main Reasons for Traffic Rules

The major perceived reason for all traffic rules was safety (49%), followed by efficient traffic flow (31%) and giving everyone a fair go (12%). Revenue raising was not generally seen to be a main reason for traffic rules except to some extent for parking rules (23%).

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- Parking regulations were primarily seen as a means of giving all drivers a fair share of the limited space available for parking (41%).
- Safety seen as the main reason for traffic rules operating at intersections (58%).
- Clearways and transit lanes mainly for efficient traffic flow (91%).
- Speeding rules seen largely as safety measures (90%).
- Safety seen as the main reason for rules covering pedestrians (89%).

*suggest discussion  
a 'change' not a  
document*

### Few Drivers Certain of the Levels of Fines and Points Lost for Offences

Having gained a picture pattern of self perceived knowledge of traffic laws and perceptions of the main reasons for these laws, actual driver knowledge was assessed using perceptions of the levels of fines and points lost for specified traffic offences. Those surveyed were asked to nominate the fines associated with ten offences, then points associated towards suspension of a driving licence. After each offence, drivers were asked how certain they were of their responses. A high proportion of respondents (41%) indicated that they had never known what some of these penalties were while 30% were not sure of their answers and another (19%) had forgotten what the penalties were. This indicates that few drivers (about 10%) have a clear picture in their mind of what the monetary and points penalties are for an offence before committing that offence, although this varies between the selected offences.

### Good Knowledge of Parking Penalties Probably a Result of the Relative Frequency of Offences.

The offence or infringement of exceeding time in a restricted parking space was seen by most drivers (53%) to have a fine of \$10. Few drivers (17%) saw any points loss for this offence. The existing fine is \$10 and no points are lost for this offence. Thus, most drivers had a good knowledge of the actual fine level. Only 24% of respondents were certain of the penalty, although this is higher than for other offences. This means that, although there was much uncertainty about knowledge of these penalties, the perceptions that most drivers had were for the most part correct.

Double parking on a busy main road, an offence which would be more disruptive to traffic flow than the one above, showed a perceived modal fine of \$11 to \$20 (46%) of respondents with significant numbers giving fines up to \$40. The corresponding modal number of points lost was low with a significant 25% indicating 2 points and very few respondents were certain of the fine penalty (5%). The existing fine is \$10 and no points are lost for this offence. Standing on a bus stop as an offence showed a very similar pattern of perceived fines and points lost to that for the above offence, although the perceived penalties were slightly lower.

### Higher Perceived Penalties for Intersection Offences Except for Blocking Intersections.

Offences at intersections were generally seen to have higher penalties than parking offences. Disobeying a 'no right turn' sign showed a modal fine of \$11 to \$20 (34%). The corresponding modal points lost were 2. Again, few respondents were certain, (8%) and 41% had never known the penalty.

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A similar pattern to the above was noted for the offence of disobeying traffic lights, although the perceived penalties were substantially higher with a modal fine of \$31 to \$40 (39% of respondents) and a modal points loss of 2 (30%). Certainty of the penalty was slightly higher although 38% had still never known what the penalty was. Since the correct fine is \$40 and the correct number of points lost is four, many respondents had a reasonably accurate perception of the true penalties. These results suggest that disobeying traffic lights is seen as a more serious offence than disobeying a 'no right turn' sign.

The offence of queuing across an intersection in heavy traffic was seen to have a generally lower penalty than the above two offences with a modal fine of \$11 to \$20 (44%) and a modal points loss of 2. It was also very apparent that very few people were certain of the penalty (4%). The true fine is \$15 and no points are lost for this offence.

### Clearway and Transit Lane Penalties Generally not Well Known.

Stopping on a designated clearway in peak hour traffic showed a modal fine of \$11 to \$20 (42%), with another 30% giving up to \$40. The corresponding modal points loss was 2. Many drivers may not come into regular contact with clearways, especially if they do not drive towards the city centre in normal peak hours and levels of certainty were very low (4%). This is supported in some degree by the sample group variations which indicate lower penalties and less certainty among those sampled at some outer locations and some inner city office locations where many drivers would use public transport for peak hour journeys. Another plausible interpretation is that, while many drivers may be exposed to clearways, they do not commit clearway offences and therefore are not detected and penalised and do not find out what the penalty is.

The offence of driving illegally in a transit lane showed a very similar pattern of fines and points lost to the above offence, although the perceived penalties were slightly lower. Even fewer drivers were certain of the penalty (5.4%) and half had never known the true penalty. The sample destination variation shows a similar pattern to that for stopping in a clearway.

### Respondents More Familiar with Penalties for Exceeding Speed Limits.

Of all the non-parking offences selected for the assessment of perceived penalties, exceeding the speed limit by less than 15 kph was the most certain in the minds of respondents, although only 19% thought they were in some degree certain of the penalty. The modal fine was \$31 to \$40 (27%) which is close to the true fine of \$30, although considerable variation was evident. The modal number of points lost, however, was lower than the true penalty at 2. (37%).

### Awareness of Penalties for Pedestrian Offences Probably Related to Low Enforcement Levels.

Knowledge of pedestrian offence penalties would be expected to be low given the apparent low level of enforcement of pedestrian rules. 60% saw the fine as \$10 or less and very few indicated any loss of points. This corresponds well to the existing fine of only \$2 and no loss of points for this offence. Certainty of the penalties was again low and 50% had never known the penalty. It seems that, while most respondents have a correct view of the penalties, they are not very certain of them, and this is probably due to the low enforcement levels and detection rates for these offences. The low perceived penalties probably also relate to perceived less serious nature of these offences, as this was an area where uncertainty did not lead to overestimation of penalties.

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### Reported Offence Rates

Parking and speeding offences accounted for the great majority of the offences reported by respondents over the last five years. Over a third of respondents (39%) had been convicted of a traffic offence or infringement while 25% had had a speeding conviction (see Table 5). Less than 10% had been convicted of an offence at an intersection while few respondents had been detected committing a clearway, transit lane or pedestrian offence. These results confirm the previous conclusions that knowledge of the penalty for an offence is linked to experience with convictions or detections while committing the offence since both parking and speeding offences are both more frequently committed by respondents.

Table 5: Number of Offences in Last Five Years (in % of Sample)

| Type of Offence       | Number of Offences |      |     |     |     |     |
|-----------------------|--------------------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
|                       | 0                  | 1    | 2   | 3   | 4   | 5+  |
| Parking               | 60.8               | 18.1 | 3.4 | 3.8 | 1.9 | 2.8 |
| Intersection          | 91.2               | 8.2  | 0.5 | 0.1 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Clearway/Transit Lane | 98.1               | 1.6  | 0.2 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Speeding              | 74.9               | 16.6 | 5.6 | 1.6 | 0.6 | 0.7 |
| Pedestrian            | 99.7               | 0.2  | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| TOTAL                 | 85.7               | 9.0  | 3.0 | 1.1 | 0.5 | 0.7 |

An indication of how representative the sample was in terms of offence rates is gained by calculating overall offence rates for all types of offences (except parking offences) and comparing them to a similar figure derived from existing data sources. The sample data gives an overall annual rate of 101.5 offences per 1000 respondents over the last five years. This number should be a slight underestimate of the true figure since respondents with more than 5 offences were assigned only 5 offences in the calculation of offence rates. The above rate produces a total number of offences per annum of approximately 256,000. The actual average annual number of reported offences for the same 1972-77 period was approximately 289,000. The sample estimation is about 89% of the true figure, which cannot be rejected as a representative statewide sample.

### Perceived Seriousness of Offences

In table 6, the results of the questions regarding the seriousness of the ten offences is given. The main findings were:

- Most serious parking offences were those which directly cause the holding up of traffic flow rather than those concerned with the equitable or efficient use of designated parking spaces.

Table 6: Perceived Seriousness of Selected Offences (In percentages)

|  | Very<br>Minor | Minor | Not<br>Sure | Serious | Very<br>Serious | Scale<br>Mean | Standard<br>Deviation | Correlation with<br>number of<br>offences in each<br>offence group |
|--|---------------|-------|-------------|---------|-----------------|---------------|-----------------------|--|
|  | %             | %     | %           | %       | %               |               |                       |  |
| Exceed time in restricted parking space    | 50.3          | 43.8  | 2.2         | 3.0     | 0.6             | 1.60          | 0.76                  | - 0.142  |
| Disobey 'no right turn' sign               | 0.7           | 18.5  | 11.5        | 54.3    | 15.1            | 3.65          | 0.98                  | - 0.035  |
| Double park on busy main road              | 0.5           | 9.3   | 6.2         | 61.4    | 22.6            | 3.97          | 0.85                  | - 0.078  |
| Stand at bus stop                          | 5.4           | 48.2  | 11.7        | 30.3    | 4.4             | 2.81          | 1.08                  | - 0.061  |
| Disobey traffic lights                     | 0.1           | 1.6   | 1.3         | 32.6    | 64.4            | 4.60          | 0.62                  | + 0.003  |
| Queue across intersection in heavy traffic | 1.0           | 16.9  | 9.2         | 59.1    | 13.8            | 3.69          | 0.96                  | - 0.043  |
| Stop on clearway in peak hour traffic      | 0.7           | 13.2  | 8.0         | 56.8    | 21.3            | 3.85          | 0.94                  | - 0.004  |
| Drive illegally in transit lane            | 10.3          | 46.7  | 15.5        | 22.9    | 4.7             | 2.66          | 1.10                  | - 0.036  |
| Exceed speed limit by less than 15 kph     | 10.0          | 49.8  | 12.3        | 24.0    | 3.8             | 2.62          | 1.09                  | - 0.109  |
| Walk contrary to 'don't walk' sign         | 18.1          | 33.3  | 8.3         | 30.2    | 10.1            | 2.81          | 1.33                  | - 0.024  |

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- Disobeying traffic lights seen as the most serious offence overall.
- Stopping on clearways seen as more serious than driving illegally in transit lanes.
- Speeding seen as a minor offence by most respondents.
- Pedestrian offences were seen by most respondents to be minor (51.4% of respondents) although a significant number thought they were serious (40.3%).
- Inverse relationship between perceived seriousness and number of offences reported.

### Situations Mitigating Traffic Laws

When asked in what circumstances not observing the traffic laws would be justified, the following responses were collected:

- Medical emergencies waived most rules except disobeying traffic light (45% would) and queuing across intersection (36%).
- Speeding was the most acceptable violation in early morning (49% would) and hurrying to catch a plane (42%).
- Getting lost was more acceptable than lateness for violations, but the relatively unserious violation of parking rules were the main recipients of justified law breaking.
- Queuing across intersections received its highest approval ratings in heavy traffic but still only 9% would.

The above findings related to acceptable offences in different situations reflect perceptions of the seriousness of these offences in that the more serious offences are generally seen to be less acceptable in most situations than less serious offences. Even though the relative seriousness of offences varies with each situation, the most serious and least serious offences generally did not vary greatly in acceptability between the selected driving situations.

### Attitudes to Enforcement Procedures

Having examined respondents' perceptions of various aspects of traffic offences, their attitudes to enforcement procedures were assessed with a view to discovering which enforcement procedures were seen as effective, and/or fair. These can be summarised as:

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- Respondents divided over fairness of vehicle tow-aways as an enforcement procedure.
- Unmarked patrol vehicles seen as less effective and less fair than marked vehicles.
- Breathalisers seen as fairer than radar speed traps.
- Parking enforcement procedures generally seen as both fair and effective.
- General unsureness and mistrust of hidden surveillance techniques.
- Warnings and cautions seen as far more fair than Court appearances.
- Respondents divided over effectiveness of leaflets and brochures as incentives for greater traffic law observance.
- Publicity in printed media seen as more effective than Government leaflets and brochures.
- Mass electronic media seen as the most effective information channels.
- Special licences for good drivers seen as effective by many respondents.
- Rebates on licence and registration fees seen as very effective.
- Education programmes in schools and universities seen as effective, except among those involved in tertiary education.
- Standard fines seen as fairest penalties for parking offences.
- Fines related to previous record seen as fairer for offences which hold up traffic.
- Licence suspension seen as fairer for offences which can cause damage or injury.
- New and untried penalties generally not seen as fairest, for example marking of vehicles, restricted licences.

The correlation between perceptions of the effectiveness and fairness of individual measures was positive and significant. The relationship was strongest for "devious" and "ineffective" measures.

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### Measures to Promote Traffic Law Observance

Following the discussion of penalties, a range of positive inducements were considered. Over half the sample (53%) felt that financial rewards for good drivers, through rebates or registration or licence fees would be very effective. The next most effective technique would be peak hour television and radio programmes to educate drivers. Programmes in schools and universities were viewed as similarly effective (31% and 29% respectively). Written material did not rate as effective, and generally drivers did not identify positive measures as effective as penalties.

### Deterrent Levels of Fines

Given that standard fine procedures were perceived as the fairest penalties for traffic law offenders, the level at which drivers felt they would need to be set to prevent offences is an important question. Respondents checked one of nine levels from \$0-300 for the ten offences listed earlier.

Table 7: Fines Sufficient to Deter Offences

| Offences                                 | Mean Fine | Mode Fine |
|--|-----------|-----------|
| Exceed times in restricted parking space | \$30      | \$10      |
| Disobey 'no right turn' sign             | \$50      | \$50      |
| Double park on busy road                 | \$50      | \$50      |
| Stand on bus stop                        | \$30      | \$50      |
| Disobey traffic lights                   | \$75      | \$50      |
| Queue across intersection                | \$50      | \$50      |
| Stop on clearway in peak hour traffic    | \$50      | \$50      |
| Drive illegally in transit lane          | \$50      | \$50      |
| Exceed speed limit by less than 15 kph   | \$50      | \$50      |
| Walk contrary to 'don't walk' sign       | \$30      | \$10      |

The results of the investigation indicate that:

- Higher fines are needed to deter drivers from committing parking offences (\$30 to \$50).
- Intersection offences require higher fines. Especially:
  - queuing across intersections (\$50),
  - disobeying 'NO RIGHT TURN' sign (\$50),
  - disobeying traffic lights (\$75).
- Clearway and transit lane offence fines not seen to have sufficient deterrent effect (\$30 to \$50 perceived to be required).

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- Wider range of 'deterrent' fines seen for speeding offences (\$50 to \$100).
- Pedestrian offences seen to require relatively low fines (\$20 to \$30).

There was a distinct positive relationship between driver's income and the level of fines necessary to prevent offences. Correlation co-efficients ranged +.052 to +.128.

*variation on 'one' law for the rich ...*

The Risk of Detection

The final investigation was into the relative risks of being detected breaking the law. Drivers were asked to differentiate between themselves and other drivers on ranking which offences they would most likely be caught doing (rank 1).

Table 8: Perceived Levels of Relative Risk Attached to Specified Offences

|   | Mean Ranks             |                                 | Correlation Co-efficients: Self/Other Comparison |
|---|------------------------|---------------------------------|--|
|   | Relative Risk for Self | Relative Risk for other Drivers |  |
| Exceed time in restricted parking space | 2.86                   | 3.46                            | +0.336   |
| Disobey 'NO RIGHT TURN' sign            | 6.60                   | 6.20                            | +0.314   |
| Double park                             | 5.10                   | 4.91                            | +0.297   |
| Stand on bus stop                       | 4.74                   | 5.84                            | +0.305   |
| Disobey traffic lights                  | 6.57                   | 5.53                            | +0.410   |
| Queue across intersection               | 5.21                   | 5.04                            | +0.260   |
| Stop on clearway                        | 5.73                   | 5.48                            | +0.297   |
| Drive illegally in transit lane         | 5.41                   | 5.70                            | +0.332   |
| Exceed speed limit by less than 15 kph  | 2.75                   | 2.82                            | +0.505   |

The offence that respondents saw the highest risk of themselves being caught for was exceeding the speed limit by less than 15 kph, followed closely by exceeding time in a restricted parking space. It can be seen that several factors will affect the level of risk of being detected that a particular driver runs when he commits a particular offence. These are:

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- the frequency with which the driver commits the offence;
- the enforcement level for that offence;
- variations in the above frequency and enforcement level in different driving situations, times of the day, or parts of the metropolitan area; and
- the relative occurrence of high offence frequencies in combination with high enforcement levels, low offence frequencies in combination with low enforcement levels, and so on.

Furthermore, it can be summarised that:

- Double parking was seen as the least risky parking offence.
- Intersection offences have relatively low levels of perceived risk.
- Clearway and transit lane offences were seen as less risky than speeding and parking offences.
- There is a need to relate perceived risk levels to previously discussed attributes.

### Multivariate Analysis of Survey Information

Two primary tests were done on the results. The first was to test for groupings of factors that explained driver behaviour or attitudes. For this, factor analysis was used to see if any common groups of offences existed, with similar response patterns, which would simplify later analysis. None did. Each offence studied has to be considered individually as there is insufficient consistency between "parking" offences for example to allow generalised predictions of driver attitudes towards the offences in this category.

The second series of tests were carried out using stepwise multiple regressions on the dependent variable of risk of detection associated with specific offences. This variable can be equated with the effectiveness of traffic law observance. The regressions put in 15 independent variables on driver perceptions and socio-economic characteristics. None of independent variables proved to have much explanatory value. The scores for the additional variables did not exclude outliers and no  $R^2$  value exceeded .06. However, some trends in the data were:

### Areas of Attention for Increasing Perceived Risks for Parking Offences

For the offences related to restricted parking spaces, the best way of increasing the level of perceived risk may be to concentrate on those drivers who have had more parking fines and who tended to be female drivers, in older age groups and on higher incomes, because these drivers are the ones who currently see the risk of being caught as higher. This is probably because they are more likely to commit these offences.

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For double parking offences, the drivers who may most need to be influenced into thinking their risks of being caught should be higher are those with lower educational levels and those who are more certain of the penalty, together with those who currently think that both the actual penalty and the deterrent penalty are low. Again, these are the drivers who currently see the risks of being caught double parking as relatively high.

For standing on bus stop offences, the drivers who need to be influenced more are older and female drivers, and those who currently see the penalty as lower. The negative relationship between perceived risk for parking offences and perceived seriousness of these offences would be expected since drivers would naturally see higher risk offences (which would be committed and detected more frequently) as less serious.

### Perceived Risk Levels for Intersection Offences

When dealing with offences that occur at intersections it appears that the best indicators of risk are, a perceived low seriousness of the offence, age, sex and income. Since younger male drivers on low incomes see that they have more chance of being detected disobeying a 'NO RIGHT TURN' sign or disobeying traffic lights, it could mean that these are the types of drivers at which increased enforcement of observance strategies should be aimed. These results suggest that the types of drivers at whom strategies for improving traffic law observance should be aimed are, for all three offences, younger drivers, with male and lower income drivers also requiring attention for the more serious intersection offences.

### Perceived Risks for Clearway and Transit Lane Offences

Those drivers who are more likely to commit clearway or transit lane offences tended to be older and have more access to a company car, although the low frequency of these has resulted in perceptual variables being the best indicators of risk for these offences. Again, when an offence is not considered serious, drivers feel they are more likely to get caught.

### Younger Drivers with Bad Speeding Records More at Risk for Speeding Offences

For the offence of exceeding the speed limit by less than 15 kph, those who saw themselves at greater risk were those who:

- saw the offence as less serious;
- were in the younger age groups;
- tended to take longer recreation trips;
- had reported more speeding offences.

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### Perceived Risk in Disobeying "Don't Walk" Sign

Since no relative ranking of risk was measured for pedestrian offences, the dependent variable used for disobeying a 'DON'T WALK' sign was taken to be the perceived seriousness of this offence. Those who saw this pedestrian offence as more serious tended to be those who:

- saw the 'deterrent' penalty as higher;
- had greater knowledge of pedestrian rules;
- were in the older age groups;
- had lower educational levels;
- saw the fine and points loss for the offence as higher;
- tended to be female drivers.

Younger drivers would then need to have the perceived seriousness of such offences increased to minimise violations.

### DIRECTIONS FOR STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

The development of an effective traffic law observance system that will achieve traffic flow and safety objectives would involve an integrated strategy being defined for the three systems referred to earlier:

- the enforcement system;
- the traffic system;
- the road user system.

Each of these systems interact to form the traffic enforcement system. While the OECD Report on "Traffic Law Enforcement" perceived the **enforcement system** to be the central component of the total system, the present investigation is of the view that the **road user system** is the critical component. The research and analysis undertaken has clearly demonstrated that the **actual** enforcement measures do not always conform with road user **perceptions**. Hence, subjective considerations of the road user will determine his observance or non-observance of the traffic law. Any effective system of enforcement must develop methods which will prevent, persuade and punish the road user from violating traffic laws. This can be achieved by changing the laws and heightening the subjective aspects of the traffic law enforcement system.

As has been previously mentioned, it was beyond the scope of this present investigation to develop a strategy for traffic law enforcement. This would have required substantial information on existing labour and capital resources that are allocated to specific areas of traffic law enforcement. The development and implementation of strategies needs to be in consultation with other government

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agencies such as the Police Department, Department of Main Roads, Department of Motor Transport. Unless this occurs, the process of traffic law enforcement could produce a series of unrelated and potentially counterproductive strategies. Both consultation and co-ordination are necessary vehicles for achieving an efficient and dynamic traffic law observance system.

The results of the literature review and the analysis of the survey have provided directions for strategy development. In general, these suggest that both positive and punitive action should be taken by enforcement agencies in an attempt to increase traffic law observance. Positive action that could be taken by the responsible enforcement agencies would include:

- review of rationale, existing traffic rules and policies;
- education, information and public relations campaigns;
- rebates on licences and possibly car registration for good driving records.

In the main, the strategy directions that are formulated in the following sections of the report are aimed at deterring the offenders and potentially high risk groups, rather than being designed for all road users. As such, these essentially focus on methods that:

- increase the perceived level of enforcement;
- increase the perceived risk and actual rate of detection;
- increase the perceived risk of prosecution/penalisation;
- increase penalties, particularly fines.

The analysis of the surveys has clearly indicated that these measures should be introduced together, rather than on a random basis, for example, the deterrent value of fines is minimised unless actual detection rates increase and the increase in penalties are given publicity. In addition, the analysis has indicated the perceived seriousness of various offences which can provide one effective criteria for determining review and implementation priorities.

### FURTHER INVESTIGATIONS

As yet, no comparative review has been undertaken across Australia in relation to the whole or part of the traffic law enforcement issue. Furthermore, no comprehensive review appears to have been undertaken for any one State within Australia. This report outlines work done on the "road user system" in 1978. Currently, research is being conducted on other aspects of the system and for the concern of specific government agencies. The co-ordination and comprehensive outlook that could most effectively achieve improved rates of traffic law observance are lacking.

It is opportune that the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Road Safety has recently been appointed to investigate Traffic Law and its Enforcement. The economic and social cost associated with non-observance of traffic rules and ensuing accidents is increasingly recognised by all sectors of the community. This provides an ideal opportunity for comparing:

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- the enforcement system throughout the various States (legislation, rules, courts, police, etc.);
- the traffic system (flows and accidents);
- the road user system.

The analysis undertaken for various locations in Sydney could be readily extended to the other States to provide comparative data on characteristics, behaviour, attitudes and risk perception. Furthermore, just as the Housing Cost Enquiry compared urban planning, legislation, rules and procedures, so too could this be completed for each State in relation to traffic rules and regulations. The respective agencies in each State are already receptacles for relevant information relating to accidents and traffic flows.

A co-operative venture involving all various States would provide:

- a national framework for research, evaluation and monitoring of the three parts of the traffic law enforcement system;
- each of the States with new information to assist them in developing and implementing more effective traffic law enforcement procedures.

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