



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PLANNING, TRANSPORT AND CITY SERVICES
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Submission No 34 – Antony Burnham

Inquiry into the impact of revised speed limits in Civic – Petitions 31-21 and 38-21

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This is my submission to the Inquiry into impact of revised speed limits In Civic – Petitions 31-21 and 38-21.

I was caught by the camera on the westbound stretch of Barry Drive by Marcus Clarke Street. I had driven through Cooyong Street and observed the limit there correctly. However, after dropping off my friend in Moore Street and turning the car around to rejoin Barry Drive I forgot the limit was in place. I did not see the sign before the camera as I was checking my mirrors and changing lanes to be in the right hand lane. There were no other vehicles on the road so it was not obvious that my speed was too high. I remembered the new limit as I passed the traffic lights by Marcus Clarke Street and slowed down, but it was already too late. I was fined \$301 for driving at 53 km/h in a 40 zone.

In my opinion the 40 limit is excessively low and in the E-W direction continues for an unjustifiable distance. This stretch of Barry Drive has few pedestrians, two lanes in each direction (with a concrete central divider to prevent head-on collisions), traffic lights regulating all right turns and excellent visibility owing to the width and straightness of the road, and the lack of parked vehicles. In short it has none of the characteristics of a road where one should go slow and many safety features to prevent accidents. (I would add that I have crossed at the pedestrian crossing there most days for the last seven years and never seen remnants of an accident there, which suggests to me it is not a dangerous patch of road.) Furthermore, the fact that a 60 km limit was in effect for so long makes it very easy to slip back into ingrained habits built up over many years of driving, particularly when one's attention is focussed on the road (looking for vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians) and not on reading signs. It is a bit like a game of Simon says - you get so used to doing things one way it is very easy to make a mistake, and a penalty of \$301 for driving at 53 km/h on a wide, straight road with no vehicles or pedestrians around is very harsh for something that was considered normal behaviour a month or two previously. (I

don't drive through Civic every day so this was my first encounter with the new limit, despite it being early August.)

The 60 km/h limit worked fine - I am not aware of any deaths or serious injuries due to vehicular accidents. It seems absurd to have a lower limit on a wide, straight, traffic light-controlled road than there is on winding, double-parked residential streets where a 50 km/h limit is in effect. Drivers have a natural feel for the appropriate speed of the road, and the fact that so many people are being caught out should tell you that the limit is too low here. These are not mad hoons, they are careful, law-abiding drivers (this was my first speeding penalty ever). If a 40 km/h limit is to be implemented, it should be focussed around the area that is most important, i.e. the stretch of Northbourne between Barry Drive and London Cct, which is the only place that ever experiences substantial pedestrian footfall.

Antony Burnham

