

Media Release

The Hon Danny Pearson MP

Assistant Treasurer

Minister for Regulatory Reform

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Minister for Creative Industries

Acting Minister for Police and Emergency Services



Friday, 9 April 2021

NEW ROAD SAFETY CAMERA TECHNOLOGY TO SAVE LIVES

Victorians using their mobile phones while driving – putting others on the road at risk – will be caught and fined after a successful trial of distracted driver technology.

The Andrews Labor Government will invest \$33.7 million to develop and implement the use of this technology on Victorian roads – and introduce new legislation to ensure those doing the wrong thing will be fined.

The trial was conducted over a three-month period, assessing a total of 679,438 vehicles. Throughout the trial one in 42 drivers was detected illegally using a mobile phone behind the wheel and putting lives at risk.

The trial was conducted while stage four restrictions were in place in Victoria. As a result, it's anticipated the rate of offending could be higher when roads are busier and movement isn't restricted.

Using two portable cameras across a number of metropolitan and regional locations, the trial found the highest rates of mobile phone use at:

- Craigieburn Road East in Wollert with a one-in-18 offence rate
- Calder Park Drive in Hillside with a one-in-21 offence rate
- Old Geelong Road in Laverton with a one-in-28 offence rate

The trial also found the distracted driving technology can detect drivers who don't wear a seatbelt, uncovering a one-in-667 offence rate state-wide. Other dangerous behaviours, such as driving without hands on the wheel or with pets on laps, were also observed.

Research from Monash University Accident Research Centre (MUARC) has estimated this technology has the capacity to prevent 95 casualty crashes per year.

Establishing permanent distracted driver technology on Victorian roads will help to free up resources for Victoria Police – who currently need to physically catch drivers in the act of using their mobile phone before issuing a fine.

Further stakeholder consultation, technology testing and demonstrations, as well as a public awareness campaign are being prepared ahead of the technology being rolled out for enforcement on Victorian roads by 2023.

The distracted driving technology uses an artificial intelligence-enabled camera system to capture high-resolution images of passing vehicles in all traffic and weather conditions – day and night. Images that are deemed likely to contain a mobile phone offence are then verified by appropriately trained personnel.

The distracted driving technology is part of the Government's new *Road Safety Strategy* which aims to halve deaths and significantly reduce injuries by 2030, setting Victoria on the path towards zero road deaths by 2050.

Quotes attributable to Acting Minister for Police and Emergency Services Danny Pearson

"Using your phone while driving is unbelievably dangerous, and this trial has showed just how common it is on Victorian roads."

"It's unacceptable that so many Victorians are putting others' lives at risk – which is why we're investing \$33 million to install this new distracted driver technology, which can save up to 95 lives every year."

"It's up to all of us to do the right thing and put our phones away while driving to help keep our roads safe."

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