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More of the same the definition of insanity

The remark that insanity amounts to doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results is attributed to no less a figure than Albert Einstein, Civil Liberties Australia reminded WA Police today.

“Despite heavy-handed enforcement, particularly of minor speed infractions on safe stretches of road – such as the transition from 80 to 100 km/h heading south, and the Manning Rd slip road onto the freeway, where over-enforcement attracting the ire of local MP Don Randall – the road toll has risen to 19 deaths in the first three weeks of this year,” CLA’s WA State Director Rex Widerstrom noted.

“Yet, despite there being no evidence to suggest modest increases in speed cause more crashes* the only answer the WA Police can trot out is ‘more speed cameras’.

“In response to the urgings of Police, the Barnett Government doubled the number of speed and traffic light cameras in 2010. Yet the only result has been to line the government’s pocket with increased revenue from speeding fines,” he said.

“The other measures proposed – an increased presence of marked patrol cars and booze buses – have an undoubted positive effect on road safety. Speed cameras do not.

“It’s time the Police admitted the failure of the speed camera program in saving lives and looked to more effective deterrents. If all the Nissan Patrols and other camera vehicles – which despite Police assurances to the contrary are hidden out of sight in bushes most of the time – were repainted in Police livery and driven around, even by unsworn staff, the deterrent effect of seeing a marked vehicle would have an effect, as drivers wouldn’t know whether or not an officer was driving,’ Mr Widerstrom suggested.

“The alternative, as Einstein said, is insanity.”

Ends

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* see for example a literature review by Monash University @ <http://www.monash.edu.au/miri/research/reports/muarc053.pdf> which concludes: ‘Whereas the relationship between speed and accident severity is well understood the same cannot be said for the role of speed in accident causation’.