

WHAT'S THE RUSH? PENALTY NOTICES IN NSW

30 January, 2014 – In the last financial year, drivers in NSW paid a record \$142.9 million for speeding offences, and more than 1 in 7 speeding drivers were caught in a school zone.

As the roads get busier than ever with the return of school traffic, McCrindle Research analyses the latest NSW Office of State Revenue figures to deliver a snapshot of penalty notices across NSW. This penalty notices analysis highlights the current police focus, which, in addition to speeding, centres on school zones and mobile phones.

Total number of fines on decline, but fines cost more than ever

NUMBER OF SPEEDING FINES AND TOTAL REVENUE

	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11	2009/10	2008/09
Number of fines	618,169	580,132	588,936	707,146	758,711
Face Value	\$142.9mil	\$117.3mil	\$118.4mil	\$131.8mil	\$114.4mil
Avg cost per fine	\$231	\$202	\$201	\$186	\$151

***Figures calculated including speeding fines issued by fixed digital speed cameras, safety cameras, and NSW Police.*

Source: NSW Office of State Revenue

The total number of speeding fines issued in NSW are less today than they were four years ago, but the revenue from those fines is higher than ever. The average cost per speeding fine has increased by over 53% over the last four years, rising from \$151 to \$231 today.

“The fact that the number of speeding fines is lower now than it was four years in a state that has half a million more people than we had back then highlights that NSW drivers are being more vigilant when it comes to their speed,” says social researcher Mark McCrindle. “The incentive of higher fines and more speed and safety cameras along with the higher profile campaigns against speeding have all contributed to this decline.”

School zone speeding

While the total speeding fines issues in school zones has decreased from over 200,000 five years ago to just over 95,000 in the last financial year, speed fines are heftier than ever before. The total revenue today is still more than two thirds (23.6 million) of the revenue accrued five years ago (34.0 million), despite the number of fines issued being less than half.

SCHOOL ZONE SPEEDING

	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11	2009/10	2008/09	2007/08
Number of fines	95,123	86,845	105,406	138,370	155,393	206,284
Face Value	\$23.6 mil	\$18.5 mil	\$21.9 mil	\$27.3 mil	\$25.7 mil	\$34.0 mil
Avg cost per fine	\$248	\$213	\$208	\$198	\$165	\$165

***Figures calculated including speeding fines issued by fixed digital speed cameras and NSW Police in school zones.*

Source: NSW Office of State Revenue

Between July and December 2013, over 54,000 drivers have been caught speeding in school zones by fixed cameras or the NSW police, totalling more than \$15.4 million in fines. Only 9% of these drivers were caught directly by police, compared to the 91% who were caught by fixed cameras.

The average speed fine issued in a school zone is now \$279 if caught by a camera and \$324 if caught by police, compared to \$158 (camera) and \$262 (police) in 2007/2008.

Today, even for speeds less than 10km/h under the speed limit, vehicles are charged a \$177 fine.

Police busiest in school zones in February

Last year, February was the biggest month in which drivers were likely to be caught by NSW Police in school zones.

“As school goes back, it’s not just the children who have to learn the ropes but their parents as well,” says social researcher Mark McCrindle. “With more parents than ever dropping their children at school rather than them walking or catching the bus, driving through school zones, finding a place to drop children around school, dropping children off and finding a place to safely pick them up can create challenges for parents.”

MONTHS WITH THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF NOTICES ISSUED BY NSW POLICE IN SCHOOL ZONES

	Month	Number of notices	Face value (\$)
2012/13	February	1,166	359,552
2011/12	August	1,563	455,063
2010/11	August	1,769	491,267
2009/10	February	1,668	434,347
2008/09	August	1,540	419,943

Source: NSW Office of State Revenue

Getting the point: Extreme speeding in school zones on the decline

It seems the message is getting across – extreme speeding of 30km/h or more in school zones is seeing a downward trend over the past 5 years in the numbers of drivers fined.

SPEEDING MORE THAN 30KM/H IN A SCHOOL ZONE**

	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11	2009/10	2008/09
Total fines	841	908	1,085	950	1,012
Total face value	\$383,551	\$347,190	\$414,542	\$392,923	\$401,494

**Figures calculated including 'Exceed Speed 30km/h' and 'Exceed Speed 45km/h and over'

Source: NSW Office of State Revenue

While only 9% of all school speeding fines are issued by police rather than fixed cameras, and astounding 86% of *extreme* speeding fines are issued directly by police. Penalties for speeding more than 30 km/h (but not more than 45km/h) in a school zone include a \$1,028 fine, 6 demerit points, and a 3 month license suspension if convicted by court. Speeding over 45km/h or more leads to an immediate fine of \$2,341, 7 demerit points, and a 6 month license suspension if convicted.

Costly talk and texting: Mobile phones in school zones

In the last financial year, 36,000 drivers were caught in NSW using their mobile phone while driving, paying a total of \$11 million in fines. 1 in 50 of these drivers were caught using their phone in a school zone.

Being caught on a mobile phone outside of a school zone is hefty enough – at \$304 per fine – but those using mobiles in school zones must foot an even larger bill of \$405 per infringement. This is a 25% increase in fine from 5 years ago, when the fine for using a mobile in a school zone was \$324.

NOTICES ISSUED TO DRIVERS USING MOBILE PHONES IN SCHOOL ZONES

	2013/14*	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11	2009/10	2008/09
Driver using mobile phone in school zone	371	776	853	991	792	838
Learner/p1 using mobile phone in school zone	17	10	8	20	17	18
Total per fine	\$405	\$397	\$353	\$344	\$338	\$324
Total face value	\$157,140	\$312,042	\$303,933	\$347,784	\$273,442	\$277,344

*Offences from 1 July to 31 December, 2013

Source: NSW Office of State Revenue

The current fine (\$405) is four times as much as the average price of a hands-free car kit, and the total fines accrued through mobile phone usage in NSW could buy outright more than 12,650 of the latest iPhone 5s.

Media Contacts

For further information, interviews, or images, please contact the McCrindle Research office at 02 8824 3422 or eliane@mccrindle.com.au.

Sources: NSW Office of State Revenue, ABS, McCrindle Research.