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MEDIA RELEASE

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Accuracy of overhead speed checks questioned

Concerns were expressed in the state parliament this week about the accuracy of overhead speed advisory checks on the Princes Freeway between Melbourne and Geelong.

David Koch, upper house Member for Western Victoria said he had again been contacted by another constituent who was issued an infringement notice for speeding on 8 March 2007.

"I am concerned that this motorist may have been unjustly fined. The motorist had been travelling north from Geelong along the Princes Freeway when he passed the speed check indicator. He took the opportunity to check the speedo and calibrate the speed on his car.

"The motorist noticed that while he was travelling at 100kms/hr according to the car's speedo, the speed check indicator showed he was only doing 92kms/hr. Assuming the indicated speed displayed on the overhead gantry was correct, and as he was driving a relatively new car still under warranty, he planned to get the car's speedo fixed as soon as he got home. The vehicle was booked further along the highway and an infringement notice was received on the very day the speedo was to be calibrated.

"The motorist then wrote to Senior Sergeant Ron Ritchie of the Traffic Camera Office some six weeks ago explaining these circumstances but to date, is still waiting for a response.

"There is little doubt that my constituent's experience is not unique. Recent media reports in the *Age* and the *Geelong Advertiser* reveal that several motorists were forced to pay hefty speeding fines because they relied on the speed check display, adjusted their speed and then got caught by the fixed speed camera on the Avalon Road or Hopper's Crossing overpasses.

"While police say readings on these displays are advisory and carry no legal weight, motorists believe them to be accurate and therefore adjust their speed if their speedo shows a different reading.

"Despite several challenges from angry motorists, the Department of Justice, which is responsible for ensuring the accuracy of speed indicators, has declared that these speed indicators are checked every six months, stating they have to be within two per cent of the speed camera.

"But if the overhead speed check displays are inaccurate and are known to be so, then surely the government is guilty of just revenue raising. If there is a discrepancy between the six monthly checking period, in many cases infringement notices would have been served and settled without motorists being aware of any equipment faults.

"I have called on the Attorney-General, Rob Hulls, to assess the accuracy of speed checking devices more regularly and confirm that they do provide reliable speed checks, and if they are found to be inaccurate, they should be withdrawn from service immediately", said Mr Koch.

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