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Special Minister of State, Minister for Roads, Minister for the Arts,
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Jenny Aitchison

Minister for Regional Transport and Roads

Media Release

Cameras to enforce seatbelt compliance for road safety's sake

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Mobile phone detection cameras will begin enforcing seatbelt compliance in a new safety push aimed at reducing needless deaths on NSW roads each year.

The NSW Government will add seatbelt compliance to the work of the existing mobile phone detection camera network after a public awareness campaign and a nine-month period in which warning letters rather than fines will be issued.

In the five years to 2022, 142 lives were lost on NSW roads in fatal crashes in which victims were travelling in a vehicle but not wearing a seatbelt.

Despite five decades of enforcement and public awareness campaigns, more than 10,000 people a year are still fined for not wearing a seatbelt.

Independent modelling provided to the NSW Government suggests camera-based enforcement could save between 17 and 26 lives over five years and reduce serious, life-changing injuries by up to 62.

Legislative changes will be introduced to NSW Parliament next week ahead of a thorough public awareness campaign and a nine-month period in which drivers will receive a warning letter rather than fine. It is expected that fines from cameras will be issued in the first quarter of 2025.

Every dollar raised by seatbelt cameras will go back into road safety - as is currently the case with all fine revenue from speed, red light and mobile phone detection cameras.

Minister for Roads John Graham said:

"It has been a legal requirement to wear a seatbelt in NSW for more than 50 years, yet sadly we continue to see lives lost each and every year in crashes in which someone did not wear a seatbelt and paid the ultimate price.

"The simple act of wearing a seatbelt halves the risk of death and serious injury and we must convince the small minority of people who still refuse to put a seatbelt on to change their behaviour.

"This is a straightforward and cost-effective way to improve road safety at a time when the road toll is on the rise.

"We know our mobile phone detection cameras, which were introduced by the former government in 2020, have been effective in changing that dangerous behaviour over time, and we expect the same result as we expand their use to seatbelt enforcement.

“There will be a warning period before fines are issued to drivers to give motorists the chance to change their behaviour and that is a sensible way to proceed.

“I urge drivers to buckle up each time they are in a vehicle and make sure your passengers are also using their seatbelts. It’s a simple action but it just may save your life.”

Minister for Regional Roads and Transport Jenny Aitchison said:

“The NSW Government takes road safety seriously and the introduction of camera enforcement for seatbelt offences will ensure people buckle up on every trip.

“Over 84 per cent of fatalities and two-thirds of serious injuries where people are not wearing seatbelts occur on country roads.

“We want to see everyone using a seatbelt for every trip, it’s a simple action that has been proven to save lives.

“Fifty years ago, at the urging of the CWA, amongst others, the former Member for Maitland and this state’s longest serving Transport Minister the late Hon Milton Morris made wearing a seatbelt the law in NSW.

“We must continue this bipartisan legacy of putting safety first, and in the 21st Century, camera detection technology is vital to this task.

“We will continue community education and awareness campaigns and provide a warning period as we roll out cameras, but in the end, we must act to save lives.

“The grief, the trauma and regret of those who lose loved ones lasts a lifetime.

“We should all wear a seatbelt, every single time.”

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