

# MEDIA RELEASE

29 January 2009

## RTA MISREPRESENTS FACTS ON SCHOOL ZONE FLASHING LIGHTS

In a media release issued by the RTA on 28 January 2009 a number of false and/or misleading claims were made:

**1. The RTA claimed that I cannot provide flashing lights for \$1,000.**

I not only can but I have and will. The lights at Sophie Delezio's school cost \$1,000 each and I am offering the same lights to any other school that wants them for the same price. I already have offers of sponsorship from several major companies to fund the lights.

**2. The RTA claimed that the cost of installing my lights is \$13,000 if mains power connection is included.** It is presumably referring to lights installed on RTA signs.

The RTA prefers the use of solar power (even though it is energy negative in this application). I hereby offer to install a solar powered version of my lights on any RTA school zone sign in Sydney, including all installation costs, for \$1,000.

**3. The RTA claimed that the cost of its lights is not \$58,000 per sign.**

The RTA is spending \$46.5M to install lights at 400 school zones, meaning 800 signs. \$46.5M divided by 800 equals \$58,125. Infrastructure costs are part of the overall cost per sign.

**4. The RTA claimed that more than 260 school zones have flashing lights.**

What it failed to reveal is that over 160 of those zones are using unreliable test systems installed as part of the 43-school trial held from 2003 - 2006 and/or the 100-school trial that commenced in January 2007. The Roads Minister has stated that those lights are unreliable and have poor performance:

Media release from Eric Roozendaal dated 21 May 2006:

*"Mr Roozendaal said the trial of flashing lights at 43 schools had found the existing technology could reduce speeds but was unreliable... We need to put in place better and more effective technology... The operational performance of flashing light units was considered to be poor... On average each site recorded two faults in the 18 month period."*

There are 303 school days in 18 months. Two faults in that period equals 99.3% reliability for the FIRST trial.

In relation to the lights used in the 100-school SECOND trial, Mr Rozendaal stated in a Media release dated 26th September 2007:

*"The electronic warning systems used in the trial achieved a 98.2% reliability rating."*

In other words the lights used in the second trial were less reliable than the lights used in the first trial, which the Roads Minister said were too unreliable.

**5. The RTA claimed back-to-base monitoring is essential "to ensure our children remain safe as drivers slow down during the times when students are arriving and leaving school."**

- We have documented examples of RTA lights with back-to-base monitoring being out of operation for up to a week. (Kingsway Miranda opp. University St out for a week in May 2007, Princes Highway Blakehurst out for a week around November 2008, many others out for 1-2 days.)

- Rather than installing lights without back-to-base monitoring the RTA and government's preferred option is to install no lights at all at 96% of school zones. What will "ensure our children remain safe as drivers slow down" at those schools?

**6. The RTA claimed: "Mr Olsen's signs have to be operated and serviced manually; which means a fault could go unnoticed, putting the lives of our most vulnerable at risk."**

- The lights do not have to be operated manually. They are fully automatic.

- The only servicing is the updating of school holiday dates every 3 years or so via radio. The RTA's solar powered signs have to have their batteries replaced manually every 2-3 years.

- A fault cannot go unnoticed when hundreds of parents, teachers and students pass the signs every day.

**7. The RTA claimed "we cannot install potentially unsafe, unreliable and infrequently monitored systems when it is our children we are trying to protect."**

- Over 160 school zones (62%) are currently using lights that the Roads Minister has stated are unreliable.

- The 8 sets of lights I installed in Peakhurst and Lugarno are the ONLY model of lights that have operated with 100% reliability since the start of the RTA's 2007 trial.

- The RTA's 3-year trial at 43 schools found that "Type 1" lights (like mine at Peakhurst and Lugarno) reduced average traffic speeds by 50% more than "Type 3" lights. The lights currently being rolled out by the RTA are "Type 3" lights. (See [http://www.rta.nsw.gov.au/roadsafety/downloads/finalreport\\_flashinglights\\_2006.pdf](http://www.rta.nsw.gov.au/roadsafety/downloads/finalreport_flashinglights_2006.pdf) p.vi para.1 and p.65 para.7.) How does that smaller reduction in average speeds help protect children?

**8. The RTA claimed that I have not tendered for the lights.**

They failed to reveal that I have GIVEN my technology to them to use FOR NOTHING, apart from reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses for the Peakhurst and Lugarno lights. Why would I tender?

On 28th February 2007 I signed a Deed prepared by the RTA authorising the RTA to use my technology forever at no charge:

- Paragraph "C" on page 1 of the Deed states: "*The RTA wishes to obtain the right to use the System Generally*".

- Clause 2.1 on page 2 states: "*The Supplier grants the RTA a non-exclusive licence in perpetuity to use the System for the Permitted Purpose*".

- Clause 5.2 on page 4 states that the total I will ever be paid is: "*the receipted costs paid by the Supplier to third parties for the components used to construct and install the System at the Sites.*" (Peakhurst and Lugarno).

In other words in return for giving the RTA the right to use my technology free of charge FOREVER they did not even offer to pay for the time I had spent developing and installing the systems. They did not even pay all of my out-of-pocket expenses: Quote (email dated 19/2/2007): "*Also please note that I am unable to reimburse you for the IP56 box that was purchased for the Princes H'way Kogarah as it is not within the terms of our Agreement.*"

That was a \$20 plastic box I used for my initial lights installation at Kogarah that the RTA tore down.

**9. I hereby call on the RTA to publicly release the following information, much of which was promised following the meeting with the Roads Minister on 11th December 2008 but not delivered:**

1. Total number and exact street location of all lights signs yet to be installed as part of the \$46.5m rollout.
2. Total supply, install and ancillary costs for each type of light installed or to be installed in the current rollout.
3. Ongoing maintenance cost for each type of light being used in the current rollout.
4. Ongoing monitoring cost for each type of light being used in the current rollout.
5. Names of successful tender companies involved in the current rollout and type(s) of lights each company supplies.
6. Total amount paid to each of the above companies to date.
7. Total amount of maintenance and other costs to be paid in the future per year to each of the above companies.
8. Total amount of the \$46.5M spent to date.
9. Full details of all faults with all lights that were installed or that commenced operation since January 2007, including:
  - Location of sign
  - Type of sign and manufacturer
  - Nature of fault
  - Date and time fault occurred
  - Date and time fault fixed
  - Whether reported by back-to-base monitoring or not
10. Whose decision it was to use Type 3 lights in the current roll-out when the RTA's own comprehensive 3-year trial found that Type 1 lights reduced average traffic speeds by 50% more than Type 3 lights?
11. What is the statistical increase in risk of fatality to a child as a result of that 50% lesser reduction in average traffic speeds?

I will be seeking the above information via Freedom of Information or Parliament if it is not released.

I note that the NRMA strongly supports the use of more cost-effective lights as per their media release at <http://www.mynma.com.au/cps/rde/xchg/mynma/hs.xsl/7819.htm>

Any future signs installed by me under the current offer will use the fluorescent yellow-green colour advocated by the NRMA if available.

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