



SCHOOLZONELIGHTS.COM.AU MEDIA RELEASE



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PUBLIC MISLEAD OVER SCHOOL ZONE FLASHING LIGHTS

School zone safety campaigner Peter Olsen today claimed that the RTA and Government have been misleading the public for years over the criteria used to prioritise schools for the installation of school zone flashing lights.

"Virtually every media release issued by them on the subject of school zone flashing lights claims that previous accident history is used amongst other things as a basis for deciding which schools will have flashing lights installed.

"See http://www.rta.nsw.gov.au/newsevents/downloads/ministerial_news_releases_2008.html and http://www.rta.nsw.gov.au/newsevents/downloads/ministerial_news_releases_2009.html for 23/9/08, 3/2/09, 8/4/09, 3/6/09 and 9/8/09.

"Eg. 3 June 2009: "Flashing lights are installed at schools that need them most, based on strict criteria set by the NSW Centre for Road Safety including crash history, traffic and pedestrian volumes and speed limits."

"Similar claims are made in most rejection letters that the RTA sends to schools that request the installation of flashing lights.

"If crash history is one of the criteria used to determine which schools are most in need of lights, it follows that the RTA must have a list of previous accidents around all schools.

"I recently lodged an FOI application on the RTA under the new Government Information (Public Access) Act. It requested amongst other things a list of *readily available* information on previous accidents around schools.

"The entire application was rejected on the basis that it would constitute an unreasonable diversion of resources. It contained time estimates in relation to each request for information.

"The time estimate for providing a list of accidents around schools was **164 hours**. The wording of it made it clear that no such list currently exists but would have to be generated. (See attached.) That means the RTA cannot possibly be using crash history at present as a basis for prioritising schools for the installation of flashing lights.

"The new Act provides for individual penalties of up to \$11,000 for failure to comply so it is reasonable to assume that the information supplied by the RTA was accurate.

"I call on the Government to stop misleading the public over this vital child safety measure and commit to the installation of flashing lights at all school zones, not just the 5% currently proposed.

For more information contact Peter Olsen, 0414-538-404