

CRASH SCENE: The damaged hot rod after it left the road and struck onlookers at Harry's Diner in Brisbane

Picture: MARC ROBI

Police step up hoon blitz on city streets

By DANIEL KNOWLES

POLICE have vowed to keep up their fight against hoons after a hot-rod ploughed into a crowd of car enthusiasts at a popular Brisbane eatery.

Three people were taken to hospital on Friday night after the modified Ford T-bucket vehicle ran on to the footpath at Harry's Diner on Newmarket Rd at Windsor.

It is the second time in two years that a vehicle has hit pedestrians at the diner. In January last year, two people suffered leg injuries when a Chevrolet Corvette flew into a crowd after losing control doing a "burn-out".

Harry's Diner is a regular meeting point for performance-car enthusiasts.

Friday night's crash happened in front of a crowd of more than 200 people, drawn to the hangout by a car show this weekend.

The injured pedestrians were men aged 19 and 21, and a woman, 19. The men received minor leg injuries; the woman is being treated for possible spinal and leg injuries.

An onlooker threw a large glass bottle at ambulance officers at the scene.

Many car enthusiasts at the regular Friday night gathering blame the car crashes on an influx of younger "hoons" at the venue, which can attract up to 1000 people.

Police have been waging a campaign against hooning across the state's southeast over the past two years, confiscating more than 1100 cars under new anti-hooning laws.

The main area of concern for police has been the M1 Motorway between Brisbane and the Gold Coast. By late last year, hooning offences there had dropped significantly.

But the success in stopping hotted-up cars racing on major roads has forced some determined hoons on to suburban streets, and even Brisbane's central business district.

Police have responded by using speed guns in central Brisbane streets on Thursday and Friday nights.

Inspector Chris Thomas said there



RADAR TRAP: Police with a speed gun target hoon drivers in Brisbane's city centre

would be radar checks on CBD streets as part of a continuing blitz.

"Experience tells us that, in general, there is a higher incidence of inappropriate and dangerous driving on Thursday and Friday nights," he said.

"You can be assured that police will be conducting routine enforcement activities, in a variety of locations across the city, each and every Thursday and Friday of the year."

Citizens Against Road Slaughter executive director Phyl den Ronden said the only way to stop hooning was to have more police on the road.

"Unless we have intensified policing, it is never going to stop," Mrs den Ronden said. "Any kind of hooning needs to be stopped wherever it is and as soon as possible."

Insp Thomas said police wanted to work with motoring enthusiasts to help them enjoy their hobby and stay within the law.

Coming up is a "Talk to the Blue" day to be held at Brookside Shopping Centre on September 11.

Police, Queensland Transport and industry representatives will hold displays aimed at informing car enthusiasts about how to enjoy their hobby in safety.

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hard Teale with one of the 87 Decatur Genesis IIs installed in police vehicles

Picture: JAMIE HANSON

EXCLUSIVE
By MARK ALEXANDER

A POWERFUL mobile radar that is completely hidden from the view of motorists is the new police secret weapon against speedsters this Christmas.

Mounted on the dashboard and operated by hand-held remote control, the radar can detect speeding motorists up to 1km away and is impossible for other drivers to spot.

Much smaller than its predecessors, it does not require any outside aerials and uses state-of-the-art technology which enables it to check the speed of cars travelling in the same direction as police, as well as oncoming vehicles.

The US-built Decatur Genesis II radar can also differentiate between the speeds of two vehicles at the same time and provide a faster response and greater accuracy.

Police who have used the radar since it was introduced several weeks ago are delighted with its success.

One of its first victims was a motorcyclist travelling at 198km/h along the Barkly Hwy near Mount Isa.

Senior traffic officer Sergeant Ewan Findlater said the radar would make it harder for lead-footed drivers to escape detection. "We're getting plenty of offenders with them," he said.

Sgt Findlater predicted it would become a major speed deterrent.

"Potentially, every police car on the road - unmarked and marked - could have a radar in it and motorists wouldn't know," he said. "That's the biggest advantage."

State traffic branch Superintendent Ian McIntosh said 87 of the radars had been installed in police vehicles in the lead-up to Christmas, mostly in country regions.

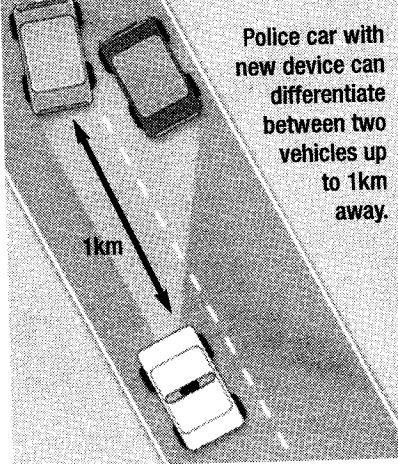
He expects another 80 to be on the roads by early next year.

"Any enhancements that will improve road safety will be trialled and introduced," he said.

But motoring groups were unconvinced of the merits of the latest anti-speeding device.

National Motorists Association Queensland spokesman James Wright doubted the radars would have any impact on reducing speed.

How it works



"Having secret radars is not going to act as a deterrent or slow people down. They're going to keep speeding and they're going to get caught," he said. "It's sneaky and it's revenue-raising."

RACQ traffic and safety manager John Wikman had concerns about accuracy and target identification.

"As we understand it, existing radar devices operating in the mobile mode can only detect vehicles going in the opposite direction, so we're interested to learn the new device can detect vehicles going in the same direction," he said.

"This compounds concerns we might have about how the operator can be completely convinced there is no doubt about accurately detecting the correct offending vehicle, especially if there is more than one vehicle on the road at the time, particularly with a 1km range," he said.

Phyl den Ronden, founder of Citizens Against Road Slaughter, said the radars would prove invaluable in helping to reduce the carnage on the roads this Christmas.

"I think they're a fantastic idea. Whenever motorists detect a radar they can see they slow down and then speed up when they go past. They won't be able to do that with this one," she said.

By DANIELLE WEBSTER

REPEAT drink-drivers could forfeit their vehicles in radical moves to curb the road toll.

State Police Minister Judy Spence said the idea of chronic offenders surrendering their vehicles had merit and she would recommend it be examined in a review of drink-driving laws.

Senior police raised the idea after the success of "hooning" laws, under which drivers lose their cars if caught three times.

A man this week became the first person in Queensland ordered to forfeit his car under the anti-hoon laws.

The Redcliffe Magistrates Court on Thursday upheld a police application to confiscate his 1992 Holden sedan, which had been seized twice before.

Since the introduction of hooning laws in November

Drink-driver car forfeit

SM 23/1/05

Tough proposal follows success of anti-hoon law

2000, 1691 cars have been confiscated for 48 hours from first-time offenders.

Thirty-three second offenders have lost their cars for three months.

Police have applications before the court to seize and sell another two vehicles.

"Confiscation is a significant deterrent to re-offending," one senior police officer told *The Sunday Mail*.

A third of Queensland's road toll - 504 deaths - in the past five years has been attributed to drink-driving.

Ms Spence said further research would be needed to assess whether confiscation could work with drink-drivers.

Ms Spence said other issues needed to be considered, such as the effect of forfeiture on other drivers in a single-car family.

Phyl den Ronden, the chief administrator of road victims support group Citizens Against Road Slaughter, supported the proposed change, saying more people were killed and maimed by drink-drivers than by hoons.

"It is most definitely a good idea. I don't think drink-drivers learn their lesson the first time, but if they are without their vehicle they may consider their stupid actions," Mrs den Ronden said.

During the Christmas holiday period 177,363 random breath tests detected 1183 drink-drivers. This equates to one in 149, a decrease from the previous Christmas's one in 121.

The Queensland Drug and Alcohol Foundation's Bob Aldred said vehicle con-

fiscation would be a harsh penalty, and urged the Government to look at driver rehabilitation and treatment.

RACQ spokesman Jim Kershaw said an ignition locking device would stop re-offenders while not denying other family members use of a vehicle.

"The issue of repeat drink driving is a serious one that needs addressing," he said.

The result of Queensland Transport's review of drink-driving sanctions and penalties is expected later this year.



'MERIT': Judy Spence