



Boy racer “sting” gets cars off the road

Boy racers are steering clear of Dalziel Place, an industrial cul-de-sac in Woolston Christchurch, after businesses rallied together.

For more than three years Dalziel Place doubled as a race track with groups of cars arriving on mass during weekends and creating havoc before moving on to the next target.

Drifting, burn-outs and racing were the usual crowd pleasers, and with that came the noise pollution, diesel, smashed bottles and other rubbish.

“It’s frightening,” says resident and business owner Peter Rigg. “The noise levels are unbelievable and they’re dangerous - aiming cars at each other and drifting into makeshift grandstands. I don’t know how someone hasn’t been killed.”

Monday mornings were a nightmare for business owners. Gardens and business frontages were trashed, with dangerous amounts of glass on roads and driveways.

But then RISC moved in – the Retail and Industrial Surveillance Company.

A number of cameras mounted on their building and other hidden locations captured the boy racers’ antics. From full-on, out of control congregations of 50 or more people to sole drivers coming down for a quick burn-out on a Saturday afternoon.

Something had to be done and RISC was up for the challenge. Licensed to carry out video surveillance, RISC owns a specialized number plate camera.

Graham Scott and Peter Moore of RISC got together with the other affected business owners, and devised a “sting” – a plan to identify the culprits and hand the footage over to police.

Graham Scott involved Senior Constable Peter Hansen from the beginning. “He was really supportive and said, ‘you get the footage and we’ll act on it’.”

So began the complicated process of configuring the number plate camera to capture number plates and identify drivers in any conditions.

"It's technically very difficult to capture numbers plates because there are so many variables like lighting, weather conditions, head and tail lights, and vehicle speed," Pete says.

RISC's technicians refined the process with plenty of opportunity to test the camera's configuration.

Then, over a three week period in March, operation "boy racer" began, including the stealthily concealed number plate camera, and "garden cam" – literally planted in one of the business frontages with a ground level view.

It wasn't pretty.

Senior Constable Peter Hansen said drivers certainly got a bit of a shock to find police at their door with indisputable evidence of traffic violations.

In all, six drivers had their cars impounded for 28 days as a result of the sting. But best of all, the word has got out. The boy racers are staying away.

Business owner Mel Sanders says RISC's cameras have done them all a favour. "It's a win-win."

Pete Moore says because the cost of the operation was shared by the affected businesses it was affordable and effective because the police followed through.

"The police have said bring us more footage and we'll keep acting on it," says Pete. "I think that gives us a lot more scope to undertake this type of surveillance for other businesses in other boy-racer affected areas.

"They can have faith that not only can we identify them, but the police will act."

For more information about "operation by-racer" or video surveillance in general, please contact RISC.

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