

AA chief attacks Govt

Dangerous conditions on the roads in Hongkong are not only caused by road-users, but also – and perhaps more often – by Government neglect.

"Poor planning, a failure to educate road-users, misapplied enforcement policies, petty and irritating restrictions – these are all examples of Government neglect," the president of the Hongkong Automobile Association, Mr Gerald Strickland, states in the latest edition of the AA Gazette.

"The AA has frequently expressed the view that our existing roads could be used much more efficiently, and by implication more safely, if some simple but quite radical policies were adopted," he pointed out in a hard-hitting editorial.

"For example, we would like to see tough but fair traffic police whose primary objective was education but who would also discipline flagrant offenders, queue-crashers and lane-weavers.

"Cannot the Government find the courage to drastically revise the rules governing the conduct of mini-buses and to enforce them?" Mr Strickland asks.

"Let us get parked cars off the main thoroughfares by providing off-street car parks, at least until acceptable alternative public transport is available," he urges.

"Let the Financial Secretary stop using meters, car parks and vehicle registrations as devices to raise maximum public revenue, and instead let all transport-related taxes and fees be directed towards achieving the objectives of a long-term comprehensive traffic and transport plan," Mr Strickland adds.

The HKAA's contribution to the current Road Safety campaign was last Sunday's first-ever Driver of the Year competition. This went off smoothly and was won by a China Motor Bus driver – which raised a few eyebrows among the motoring fraternity in Hongkong.

"While the AA fully supports the Road Safety campaign, its members will continue to press for more positive action by the Government itself," Mr Strickland stated.

The Director of Traffic, Chief Superintendent Peter Jackson, last week announced a disturbing upward trend in the number of accidents and casualty figures during the third quarter of the year.

He was particularly concerned with the number of motorcyclists who lost their lives on the roads during this period.