

Get in the Left Lane!

Every morning I strive to leave home 30 minutes before I need to be at work. But the daily morning ritual always ends up with me rushing out the door around ten minutes later than planned.

When I start the car I prepare myself for a frustrating drive to work.

As I head toward Fyshwick from Queanbeyan I wonder how long it will take before I run into one of those drivers who don't know the right lane is for overtaking.

It usually happens as soon as I turn left onto Canberra Avenue, just up from the main street of Queanbeyan. Cars line both lanes and the ones on the right are not using the lane to pass the ones on the left. Most often they stay in the right lane until they need to turn off, whether that is 40 kms down the road.

Driving in the right lane is not just something that NSW drivers do, ACT ones are just as bad. I remember the years I drove down Drakeford Drive from Oxley to Civic on my way to work and the same thing would happen, and it wasn't just during peak hour periods either.

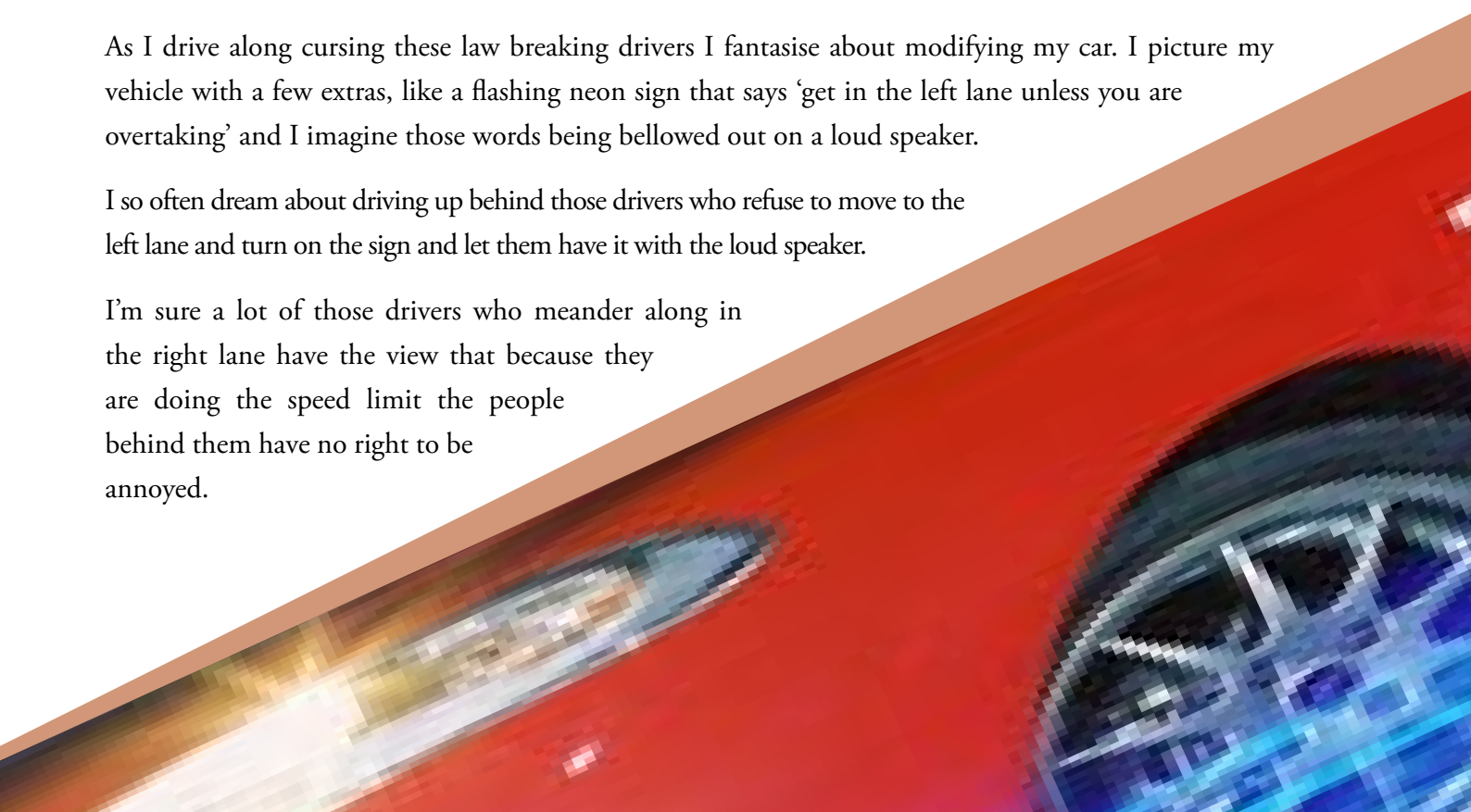
I've heard all those terrible stories about what happens when you tail gate but how else do you send a message that drivers should not be in the right lane unless they are overtaking?

I wonder whether a lot of drivers are unaware that the law in the ACT and NSW actually states that the right lane is to be used as an overtaking lane in speed zones of 80 kms and over.

As I drive along cursing these law breaking drivers I fantasise about modifying my car. I picture my vehicle with a few extras, like a flashing neon sign that says 'get in the left lane unless you are overtaking' and I imagine those words being bellowed out on a loud speaker.

I so often dream about driving up behind those drivers who refuse to move to the left lane and turn on the sign and let them have it with the loud speaker.

I'm sure a lot of those drivers who meander along in the right lane have the view that because they are doing the speed limit the people behind them have no right to be annoyed.



But it shouldn't matter that they are doing the speed limit, the right lane is for overtaking.

I think we should adopt the Perth attitude toward people who clog up the traffic and break the law.

They know how to treat this sort of criminal.

Some years ago I was over there working and as I was driving home one night a police car came up behind me with the lights flashing and siren shrieking.

I wondered what I had done. Was the hire car I was driving a stolen vehicle, did I run over someone without knowing or were they chasing me because I looked like a drug runner?

When the officer approached my car he asked me did I know why I was being stopped. I said I didn't think I was speeding. 'What were you doing in the right lane,' he enquired. I looked at him blankly. He asked me where I was from. I told him I live in Canberra but was visiting Perth temporarily.

"We do not drive in the right lane unless we are over taking," he said. "We take this matter very seriously in Perth." He gave me friendly advice about staying in the left lane and then he bid me farewell.

I wish the ACT and Queanbeyan Police would adopt the same attitude with local offenders.

So until the local police take up the fight I will carry on fantasising about my flashing neon sign and the loud speaker, and I will continue to give those right hand lane hogs a dirty stare if I get the opportunity to drive by them.

