

Media Release

The Hon Martin Pakula MP

Attorney-General

Minister for Racing



Tuesday, 19 September, 2017

NEW FINES SCHEME TO SUPPORT FAMILY VIOLENCE VICTIM SURVIVORS

Victim survivors of family violence will no longer be unfairly liable for fines incurred by perpetrators, under a new scheme introduced into Parliament by the Andrews Labor Government today.

The Fines Reform Amendment Bill 2017 completes the implementation of two key recommendations from the Royal Commission into Family Violence (112 and 113) and will create a new, customised and standalone scheme to better support victim survivors within the infringements system.

The scheme will be available to victim survivors who unfairly incur fines as the result of a perpetrator using their vehicle. It will also be available to victim survivors who incur fines as a result of their own offending that was substantially contributed to by their experience of family violence – such as fleeing unsafe circumstances.

Currently, in order to apply to have their fines revoked, victim survivors are required to wrongly admit to committing the offence, or to nominate the driver which can place them at risk.

The new scheme will allow eligible applicants to have the relevant fines withdrawn without naming the perpetrator, ensuring the debts do not contribute to the cycle of violence.

The scheme will be administered by specialist trained staff, with applicants providing evidence including a statutory declaration, and other evidence such as a family violence intervention order or a family violence safety notice, to show that the infringement occurred in the circumstances of family violence.

Serious road safety offences will not be eligible for the family violence scheme because of the high risk they pose to public safety, including drink driving, drug driving and excessive speed.

In addition to the family violence reforms, the new laws introduced today will enable the courts to refer court orders in relation to unpaid infringement fines and court fines to the Director of Fines Victoria for collection or enforcement. This will help to free up valuable court time and resources for other matters.

The reforms build on other social justice initiatives delivered by the Labor Government to make the state's infringements system easier and fairer for Victorians. In July, the Government made changes to the internal review provisions, which created of a new ground of review for special circumstances, including family violence.

Quotes attributable to Attorney-General Martin Pakula

"Victim survivors of family violence shouldn't be responsible for fine debt that's been racked up by their perpetrator."

"This new scheme will help to ensure the fine system is fairer for victim survivors and doesn't compound the cycle of family violence."

Quote attributable to Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence Natalie Hutchins

"These reforms deliver on key recommendations made by the Royal Commission and will help take the burden off victim survivors who are unfairly incurring fines as a result of family violence."

Media Contact: Holly Little 0437 381 620 | holly.little@minstaff.vic.gov.au