

Fines and Traffic Law Working Group Report

The Fines and Traffic Law Working Group (**FTLWG**) met on Wednesday 7 November 2019.

Prisoners and Identification Documents Subcommittee

The Prisoners and Identification Documents (**P&ID**) Subcommittee tabled its final report. The FTLWG accepted the recommendation to close the group.

The P&ID Subcommittee, chaired by Julianne Evans, Revenue NSW, was formed in late 2018 with representatives from eleven agencies including Corrective Services, Service NSW and Births, Deaths and Marriages (BDM). The purpose was to consider barriers experienced by prisoners in obtaining a valid driver's licence on release and to propose solutions. Barriers include prior disqualification, fines debt and/or lack of identification documents.

The P&ID Subcommittee has achieved the following outcomes:

- In principle agreement from the Registrar, BDM to provide 3000 free birth certificates to vulnerable prisoners. Eligibility will be based on financial hardship plus at least one of the following criteria: the applicant is Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, under 25 or over 65, lives in a remote or regional location and has difficulty accessing legal services, low literacy or unable to read or at risk of homelessness on release.
- Agreement from all agencies to recommend a 'one stop shop' mobile service centre approach at Correctional Centres to assist prisoners with proof of identify documents, licence testing and re-issuing. Representatives from Service NSW will progress this proposal.
- NLAF Prisoners Forum to take ownership of a flyer/postcard promoting free birth certificates to prisoners and a communications strategy with DCS staff.

The Registrar, Births, Deaths and Marriages attended the meeting and reported a 53% increase in the registration of Aboriginal births following strategies such as the *Our Kids Count* campaign. She also advised that 392 free birth certificates were issued at the Koori Knockout.

Driver Licensing Program MOU

FTLWG understands that an MOU between RMS, Corrective Services and Juvenile Justice was signed in 2016 to reduce recidivism and improve employability of offenders through a Driver Licensing Program. The program is to provide road safety and road rules training and the opportunity for offenders to undertake the Driver Knowledge Test while in custody. FTLWG will seek further information to determine how the MOU is working and whether it could be updated to include other partners such as Service NSW.

Bicycle Fines

FTLWG continues to work with Dr Julia Quilter, Associate Professor, School of Law, University of Wollongong on the impact of bicycle fines (particularly on young people), geographical disparity in enforcement and whether there are punitive effects that are disproportionate to the offending. Dr Quilter aims to have the

initial research written up by the end of 2019. As agreed at the NLAF Plenary on 11 September 2019, the Chair will write to the Police Commissioner outlining the findings and any concerns.

Work and Development Order (WDO) Scheme

The WDO Scheme Guidelines (2017) are currently under review with non-contentious changes likely to go to the Attorney General by the end of the year. FTLWG members seek clarification around court ordered activities which are excluded from the scheme and activities undertaken under community supervision which can be counted towards a WDO. A Subcommittee will be established to look at access to WDOs for Community Corrections clients.

The WDO Scheme, a partnership between the Department of Communities and Justice, Revenue NSW and Legal Aid NSW, has won a Premier's Award in the category of *Tackling Long Standing Social Challenges*.

Next meeting: Wednesday 19 February 2020, 10am-11:30am, Legal Aid NSW.

Meredith Osborne

Chair, Fines & Traffic Law Working Group