

Fines and Traffic Law Working Group Report Quarter 3 | July to September 2020

1. Meeting of the Fines and Traffic Law Working Group (FTLWG)

The Fines and Traffic Law Working Group met on 12 August 2020.

2. Ongoing collaboration with Dr Julia Quilter

Following Dr Julia Quilter's presentation to the NLAF Plenary on the unintended impact of bicycle helmet fines and uneven enforcement across NSW, the FTLWG will prepare correspondence for the Attorney General, Police Commissioner and Minister for Transport and Roads. Dr Quilter's research has been accepted for publication in the *UNSW Law Journal* and will acknowledge NLAF.

3. Update on commencement of 'Fairer Fines' amendments

Ann King, Director Fines and Fees, Revenue NSW reported on commencement of the 'Fairer Fines' amendments on 1 July 2020. The 50% reduction has been applied to 223 fines, payment plans (now available at any stage of the fines life cycle) have increased by 15% and there has been a notable increase in WDO referrals. Most reduced fine amounts have been approved for pensioners and DSP recipients.

Members discussed the exclusion of certain offences from the 50% reduction scheme including Covid-19 Public Health Order fines. Implementation of these reforms will remain a standing item on the FTLWG agenda to monitor impact and discretionary decision-making under the guidelines. FTLWG would welcome the opportunity to contribute to the Ministerial review in 12 months.

4. Progress report on Hardship Support Program

Also in this quarter, Revenue NSW provided a progress report on the six work streams under the Hardship Support Program. An NGO forum has been established as recommended by the FTLWG. Members strongly support a proposal to remove licence sanctions as a first response to fine default in remote areas and the greater use of cautions and other diversionary options by issuing authorities.

5. End of funding for Driver Reform Implementation Team

Legal Aid NSW confirmed that funding for the Driver Reform Implementation Team ended on 30 June 2020. The Handbook and other resources will be made available to the sector and private practitioners.

Next meeting

The **next meeting** of the FTLWG is on **Wednesday 11 November 2020**, 10am to 11:30am.

Meredith Osborne

Chair, Fines & Traffic Law Working Group, 24 August 2020