

## **DRIVERS' LICENCES**

*Statement by Minister for Justice*

**MR J.B. D'ORAZIO (Ballajura - Minister for Justice)** [9.09 am]: I advise the house that today I will launch a major campaign to encourage Western Australian drivers to check whether their driver's licence has been suspended for non-payment of fines and to alert them to the consequences of driving with a suspended licence. Almost 40 000 Western Australian drivers' licences have been suspended because of non-payment of fines. Some people may not know their driver's licence has been suspended.

Tomorrow, the government will publish all these numbers in *The West Australian*. However, members may be interested to know that people can already use a new Internet database at [www.justice.wa.gov.au/fines](http://www.justice.wa.gov.au/fines) to check whether their licence is suspended, and, if it is, to find the details of outstanding fines. The Fines Enforcement Registry inquiry line on 1300 650 235 will remain open till 7.00 pm tomorrow, and from 8.00 am to 4.30 pm on Saturday, 18 September 2005, to handle inquiries from people whose numbers are listed.

The government wants to give people the chance to clear their names, clear their debts and have their licences restored. Driving with a suspended licence could make an insurance policy invalid, or, for those who drive as part of their job, be grounds for sacking. Suspended drivers cannot get a police clearance, and, if they are probationary drivers, must sit their driving test again. Worse than that, the maximum penalty for people driving with a licence suspended for non-payment of fines includes a \$1 500 fine, 12 months in jail and the loss of their licence for three years.

Licence suspension could result from failure to pay fines imposed by a range of government agencies and local governments - not only traffic fines. It is estimated that, between them, these suspended drivers owe about \$22 million in outstanding fines and infringements. The government has introduced a wide range of alternatives to make it easier for people to pay, including regular instalment payments through time-to-pay and Centrelink's Centrepay options. Drivers' licences can be restored as soon as people have made arrangements to pay outstanding fines.

This is also a good time to remind licence holders that they are required to advise the Department for Planning and Infrastructure if they change their address. If they do not, they might not receive reminder notices or advice of licence suspension. The new Internet database will be updated each week so that people can check whether their licence has been suspended for non-payment of fines.

I ask all members to assist this campaign in their electorates by alerting their constituents to it, thereby perhaps saving them from significant debt and other consequences.

**Mr M.J. Birney:** Before you sit, will you take an interjection?

**Mr J.B. D'ORAZIO:** Yes.

**Mr M.J. Birney:** Why don't you go back to the old system under which they actually physically took their licence off them?

**Mr J.B. D'ORAZIO:** Because it is part of the legislation that was passed in this Parliament.

**Mr M.J. Birney:** People are driving around who have no clue that you have snatched their licence. That will not fix it. Do you reckon 40 000 people will read that page in the paper? It's madness.

**The SPEAKER:** I hope members have finished their interesting conversation across the chamber.