



MEDIA RELEASE

Parliamentary Committee recommends comprehensive reform of unauthorised driving offences laws

Committee on Law and Safety's inquiry report released today

The NSW Legislative Assembly Committee on Law and Safety tabled a report today which recommends comprehensive reform of unauthorised driving offences laws. In 2012, these offences were the third most common principal offences of which individuals were found guilty in the Local Courts. "Our recommendations address the impacts of lengthy licence disqualifications on the community, and we anticipate that they will assist in reducing the prevalence of unauthorised driving offences," said Committee Chair, Mr John Barilaro MP.

"Currently, some individuals are serving lengthy disqualifications, sometimes for more than 10 or 20 years. Lengthy disqualifications do not necessarily act as a deterrent to re-offending, and may not be proportionate to an offender's crime," explained Mr Barilaro. "The current system significantly impacts on Aboriginal people, regional communities, young people and disadvantaged groups," Mr Barilaro said.

"If your area is not well-serviced by public transport and you can't drive, it can be difficult to maintain employment, take your children to school and do the grocery shopping. These difficulties can influence some individuals to re-offend," Mr Barilaro explained.

The Committee's recommendations include giving courts more discretion to impose disqualification periods that distinguish between different offenders; reviewing the maximum penalties to ensure that they are proportionate to the offences; and introducing vehicle sanctions for those who repeatedly drive while disqualified.

"I believe our recommendations are a step in the right direction to ensure that offenders receive penalties and disqualifications that are better tailored to their case and better reflect the public's attitudes to their actions. Importantly, courts can still impose lengthy disqualifications and serious penalties for serial offenders who put the community at risk," said Mr Barilaro.

A copy of the report may be downloaded from www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/lawandsafety.

For further comment please contact Mr John Barilaro MP on 02 6299 4899.