




Speech By
Hon. Dr Steven Miles
MEMBER FOR MOUNT COOT-THA

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Tow Truck Industry

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef) (10.01 am): In early May the *Sunday Mail* exposed the extent of the tow truck industry rort. That rort had left many motorists tricked, intimidated and ripped off. In a matter of days the Palaszczuk government set up a hotline for people to tell their stories, and within a week we announced that former District Court judge Michael Forde would lead a three-month investigation. During that time Mr Forde, an eminent and respected former District Court judge, consulted extensively. He spoke with towing operators, private property occupiers, motorists, and government and non-government bodies and organisations to put together his report. Information was gathered from the hundreds of calls to the tow truck hotline, 41 written submissions and numerous interviews.

The report was finalised and officially presented to me on Sunday, ahead of the three-month deadline. Yesterday cabinet endorsed all of the 22 recommendations made by Mr Forde. This body of work sets out the framework to overhaul the tow truck industry. I want to thank Mr Forde and his support team at TMR for their hard work.

The act covering tow truck licensing and accreditation has been amended only once in 40 years, so these changes are long overdue. By capping the fees at \$250 for a standard private property tow and \$150 for an on-site release, we will smash the business model that has allowed spotters and rogue operators to charge what they want and get away with it using intimidating tactics. This means that Queensland will be the first state in the country to cap fees for towing from private properties. Another key recommendation is increasing the existing penalties and introducing new penalties for those who contravene the tow truck legislation. For example, fines for operating an unlicensed tow truck will increase from \$252 to \$1,513, with a maximum court imposed penalty of \$20,184.

Under the recommendations, TMR will also develop guidelines outlining the minimum signage standards to promote visible, clear, comprehensive and consistent signage. They will increase enforcement activities and provide education aimed at improving community understanding of rights and obligations about private parking towing. Importantly, the tow truck hotline will continue to operate.

We are now preparing the necessary legislation to implement the recommendations and expect the new arrangements to be in place by the end of the year. The Palaszczuk government has acted swiftly and consulted widely to put an end to this rip-off rort by rogue towies once and for all. Private property towing will now be regulated. Drivers will be accredited and trucks will be licensed. While all motorists have a responsibility to park legally, they can now breathe easy knowing that they will no longer be tricked, intimidated or ripped off when their vehicle is towed.