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MEDIA RELEASE

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NEW DRIVER DISQUALIFICATION LAWS COMMENCE TOMORROW

New driver disqualification laws to protect the community better and to keep repeat offenders and dangerous drivers off our roads will come into force from midnight tonight, Attorney General Mark Speakman, Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight Melinda Pavey and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Sarah Mitchell announced today.

Mr Speakman said, “The *Road Transport Amendment (Driver Licence Disqualification) Act 2017* gives police greater powers to crackdown on people who flout the law, while providing incentives for disqualified drivers to do the right thing.”

“The reforms will have a significant effect in regional and rural NSW where limited public transport options impact on unauthorised drivers’ decisions to risk getting back behind the wheel,” Mr Speakman said.

Ms Pavey said, “The reforms also deliver a clearer pathway back to lawful driving for disqualified drivers who comply with their disqualification and demonstrate they can be trusted. Lengthy disqualification periods – which can currently exceed 10 years – provide no incentive to return to lawful driving.”

“Road safety will be the number one priority whenever the Local Court considers lifting a disqualification period. Drivers who have their disqualification lifted will still need to apply to Roads and Maritime Services and complete standard road safety and knowledge tests prior to having their licence reinstated.”

The new laws will:

- allow police to confiscate number plates or vehicles on-the-spot for three or six months for repeat unauthorised drivers and those who commit certain serious driving offences;
- allow the Local Court to lift the disqualification period for those who have been compliant with their disqualification period for two or four years. They can then reapply for a licence;
- ensure those who have been convicted of driving offences involving death or grievous bodily harm will never be eligible to have their disqualification lifted;

- introduce automatic and minimum disqualification periods for unauthorised driving offences and revise maximum imprisonment terms for unauthorised driving offences; and
- abolish the Habitual Traffic Offender Scheme. There is no equivalent scheme in any other Australian jurisdiction.

Ms Mitchell said, “Last year alone, Aboriginal people made up 14 per cent of those sentenced for unauthorised driving offences. These reforms will not only have a welcome impact on the Aboriginal community, but also disadvantaged people and people in regional and remote areas of NSW.”

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