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MEDIA RELEASE

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A FAIRER FINES SYSTEM – PROTECTING NSW’S MOST VULNERABLE PEOPLE

The NSW Government will make it easier for people to be able to pay or resolve their fines, following major changes to the State’s fines system.

From 1 July, the NSW Government will introduce an unprecedented initiative to reduce fine amounts for people facing financial hardship as well as allowing everyone to pay by instalments and providing more time for a fine to be reviewed.

In addition, changes to the *Fines Act 1996* will make it easier to inform Revenue NSW who is responsible for an offence, particularly when it comes to who is behind the wheel of a vehicle at the time of the offence.

Treasurer Dominic Perrottet said there was no better time to make the system simpler and fairer for the people of NSW.

“In making the system fairer, we have maintained the deterrent factor by ensuring all other penalties still apply, so if you were speeding, for example, you will still receive the full demerit points,” Mr Perrottet said.

“These fines should be exactly that, a deterrent, not an out of scale punishment and we want to help people who are in extreme financial hardship by allowing them to apply to have their fine amount reduced by 50 per cent.”

Attorney General Mark Speakman said there were many NSW citizens doing it tough due to the unprecedented upheaval caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

“These reforms will strike the right balance, ensuring we hold people to account for breaking the rules and endangering our roads, but without placing undue burdens on disadvantaged members of our community,” Mr Speakman said.

Customers in acute financial hardship, who are in receipt of a Government benefit at the time of their fine and apply before the fine is overdue, may be considered for a 50 per cent reduction in their fine amount.

Reductions in fine amounts are not available to those who have been issued a fine by a court, voting-related fine, jury duty fine or a fine issued to a body corporate.

Finance Minister Damien Tudehope said most people could manage their fines, with more than 70 per cent of penalty notices finalised before they became overdue.

“Currently, only customers in receipt of a Government benefit can set up a payment plan without paying an additional \$65 enforcement fee,” Mr Tudehope said.

“Time-frame restrictions will also be eased allowing customers to request a review or nominate the responsible driver at any time. The process for asking for an overdue fine to be heard in court will also be simplified.

“These changes build on existing support for vulnerable customers such as the Work and Development Order scheme that helps people clear debt and gain valuable skills through volunteer work, by completing a training course or receiving medical treatment or counselling.”

Today’s announcement is just one of many initiatives that are being rolled out to help support the people of NSW.

Anyone who would like help with their fines can contact Revenue NSW on 1300 655 805.

FAST FACTS

- To be considered for a reduced fine amount, the customer must engage with Revenue NSW before the fine becomes overdue.
- Customers will be considered for payment plans and non-financial ways to resolve fines through Work and Development Orders (WDO) before a reduced penalty amount is considered.
- The 50 per cent reduction does not apply to:
 - Any fine issued by a court (including a penalty that originated as a penalty notice prior being dealt with by a court)
 - A voting related fine;
 - A jury duty related fine;
 - A fine issued to a body corporate.
- In any successful application for a 50 per cent reduction of the penalty amount, any suspension, cancellation, disqualification or loss of demerit points on a driver licence will still apply.
- To ensure the integrity of the fines system and to align with community expectations, the Commissioner of Fines Administration reserves the right to exclude any serious or significant offences from eligibility for a 50 per cent reduction.