



Martin Pakula MP  
Attorney General  
Suite 3, 387 Springvale Rd  
Springvale, Vic, 3171

16 March 2016

Dear Mr Pakula

### **Call for an amnesty on administration fees for outstanding fines**

I am writing on behalf of Community Information & Support Victoria (CISVic) to support a campaign calling for an amnesty on administration fees for outstanding fines.

We are a peak body representing generalist community information and support services. Our local services assist people experiencing personal and financial difficulties by providing information, referral and support services including emergency relief. We liaise with local, state and federal governments on behalf of local centres, providing advocacy, expert advice and support.

Our 60+ member agencies have contact with over 300,000 people annually. Casey North Community Information & Support Service, who have initiated this campaign, are one of our member agencies.

Many clients accessing our agencies are experiencing financial hardship, struggling to meet even the most basic daily living costs. We are the largest commonwealth funded community-based emergency relief (ER) program in the state, delivering just under \$2,000,000 annually. Our ER programs deliver a range of critical supports including food, food vouchers, and assistance with household bills. For those with additional expenses like outstanding fines, we see that the financial and emotional pressure can become insurmountable.

In addition to the stress and anxiety that results from the financial burden created by fines, the Infringement system can also prove to be complicated and inflexible and very difficult to navigate and negotiate with. Debts of over \$10,000 are now required to be dealt with by the court system which has resulted in a great burden on court resources that are at breaking point with the number of cases due to be heard. Applications for revocation or special circumstance can also be difficult to negotiate.

To this end, we are asking you to consider an amnesty on the administration costs attached to fines. Such an amnesty was declared by the State Government in 2007, and this created an opportunity for people to negotiate and settle fines in a realistic way.

While we acknowledge that toll fees and other fines should be paid, we seek greater empathy by the government of the significant effect these debts and the system has on

Community Information & Support Victoria



households. Any improvement and leniency imposed by this government would be most positively welcomed by the community.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'K Wheller', written in black ink.

Kate Wheller  
Executive Officer