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MEDIA RELEASE

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COMMUNITY SAFETY DRIVES SMARTER DISQUALIFICATION LAWS

The NSW Government is toughening sanctions on those who repeatedly flout driver licence laws, but also providing a road back to lawful driving for disqualified drivers who can demonstrate they can be trusted.

The reforms were announced today by Attorney General Mark Speakman, Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight Melinda Pavey and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Sarah Mitchell alongside Member for Tamworth Kevin Anderson.

Mr Speakman said, “This overhaul of driver licence disqualification laws rebalances the system in favour of people who prove they can steer their lives back on track, while providing police with extra on-the-spot powers to punish repeat disqualified driving offenders.”

The NSW Government reforms adopt recommendations of the multi-partisan Legislative Assembly Committee on Law and Safety and will do the following:

- Allow police to confiscate number plates or vehicles (for 3 or 6 months) for repeat unauthorised drivers and those who commit certain serious driving offences.
- Allow the courts to lift the disqualification period for those who can demonstrate a commitment to lawful behaviour and who have been compliant with their disqualification period for 2 or 4 years. They can then reapply for a licence.
- Introduce automatic and minimum disqualification periods for unauthorised driving offences and revise maximum imprisonment terms for unauthorised driving offence penalties.
- Abolish the Habitual Traffic Offender Scheme, which has been proven not to be a deterrent. There is no equivalent scheme in any other Australian jurisdiction.
- Exclude anyone ever convicted of driving offences involving death or grievous bodily harm from applying to reduce their disqualification term.

“The reforms put road safety front and centre giving disqualified drivers an incentive to return to lawful driving. For those who continue to break the rules, magistrates will continue to have maximum disqualification periods available to them,” Mrs Pavey said.

Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Sarah Mitchell said, “Lengthy disqualification periods, which can currently exceed 10 years, are often ineffective, provide no incentive to return to lawful driving and disproportionately affect the disadvantaged, including Aboriginal people.”