

Friday 22 January 2010

PLAN TO CRUSH HOON DRIVING WITH TOUGH NEW LAWS

A Victorian Liberal Nationals Coalition Government will introduce tough new anti-hoon laws to reduce the damage to Victorian families caused by reckless driving and anti-social behaviour.

The Coalition's zero tolerance anti-hoon plan will make our roads and suburban streets safer by introducing tough new penalties and crushing hoon cars.

A Coalition Government will introduce tough new anti-hoon laws, including:

- immediate 30-day vehicle impoundment for a first hoon offence, and requirement that a safe driving course is completed by offender;
- up to three months impoundment for a second offence; and
- forfeiture and crushing of vehicles for a third offence after parts are stripped and sold.

Even Victoria Police admit that John Brumby's current laws are failing to break Victoria's hoon culture.

With John Brumby's laws only allowing for a 48-hour confiscation of hoon vehicles, hoons in Victoria can lose their cars on Friday night, only to pick them up on Monday morning.

Victorians need a strong zero tolerance approach to hoon driving.

This means tough laws which increase impoundment times, force hoon drivers to take safe driving training, and forfeit and crush the vehicles of the worst repeat offenders.

We must act now so offenders are deterred from continuing to endanger Victorian families with their criminal stupidity.

Under the Coalition's tough new anti-hoon plan, police will be able to apply to the courts to have a hoon vehicle crushed for a third offence, sending a clear message to hoon drivers that this conduct will no longer be tolerated.

Vehicles will be stripped of parts and crushed, or destroyed by the Transport Accident Commission as part of its ongoing testing and education programs before being crushed.

The Coalition also wants to give drivers better safety skills and education in road safety. The plan will include a compulsory safe driving course for offenders, requiring them to undertake instruction to learn and understand risks of speed, roads, traffic and dangers to other road users.

Policy

Every year the culture of hooning grows in Victoria and it is clear that John Brumby's hoon laws are not working to deter hoon drivers. We will make first offence penalties stronger and we will introduce car crushing in order to send a message to hoon drivers that the culture of hoon driving will not be tolerated.

The Coalition will also increase the period for calculating prior offences from 3 years to 6 years to cover the age range of most hoons which is 18 to 24. A third offence committed within a 6 year period will now incur forfeiture.

John Brumby dismissed the idea of strengthening hoon laws when the Coalition proposed crushing hoon vehicles 18 months ago.

Bob Cameron said in July 2008 that crushing cars was '*short-sighted, populist and completely irresponsible*' while John Brumby said this week that crushing cars should be considered.

The Coalition has taken a responsible approach by monitoring the effect of the laws in Victoria over the last year and looking at the laws adopted by other states and internationally.

Existing provisions allowing third parties to apply to vary or revoke impoundment orders will continue to apply.

In short, these provisions give a wide range of protections for third parties, including;

- impounding and forfeiture not applying for stolen or hired vehicles;
- provision for exceptional hardship cases; and
- no forfeiture if the registered operator or owner of a vehicle can prove the offence was committed without their knowledge or consent.

Crushing hoon cars is not a decision that is taken lightly, but sometimes the only thing that a hoon understands is taking away their car.

The Coalition's plan will provide a real deterrent for hoon behaviour such as burnouts, drag racing and other forms of dangerous or careless driving.

Victorian families need protection from hoon drivers and our plan will prevent and deter hoons with tough penalties.