STOPPING TOW TRUCK RIP-OFFS

Our Plan to Crack Down on Dodgy Towies

Tim Nicholls and the LNP will introduce laws to stop dodgy tow truck companies from ripping off motorists.

The Problem

There are no laws which stop motorists from being ripped off when towed from private property. Unfortunately, some tow truck operators are exploiting this loophole to charge exorbitant towing fees of more than $600 and punitive storage fees, with no limits on how far they can tow your car.

Motorists are being duped into parking in empty lots, usually with very poor signage – only to be towed away minutes after they leave their vehicle. The uncapped fees mean tow operators can pay spotters to instantly identify cars parked on private property and in some cases use other cars to "bait" unsuspecting motorists.

Motorists have experienced intimidating, thuggish behaviour from some bad eggs in the industry while the Palaszczuk Labor Government does nothing except for ordering another review.

Our Record

In government, the LNP acted to weed out bad characters in the tow truck industry. Our strong criminal gang laws specifically targeted the tow truck industry to prevent criminal gang members from working in the industry.

The Palaszczuk Labor Government wound back these laws with no real alternative.

Our Real Plan

Tim Nicholls and the LNP have listened to concerned motorists, planned and will act. The LNP will introduce laws into Parliament to stop dodgy tow truck companies from ripping off motorists. Our laws will:

- Introduce a cap on fees that can be charged by tow truck companies
- Restrict how far away your car can be towed without your consent
- Ensure appropriate signage is in place at private car parks
- Allow complaints against a person or company to be considered when deciding to grant a tow truck licence, and
- Make sure there is a proper complaints management process for motorists, with published annual statistics from the Government.

A Tim Nicholls-led LNP Government will also re-introduce measures to prevent criminal gang members from being granted a tow truck licence in the next term of Parliament.

The framework our laws create will give the Minister the ability to set regulations which restrict how far your car can be towed from a private car park and set a cap on the fees that tow companies can charge. This power already exists for cars towed from road crashes.

To ensure motorists aren't being tricked into getting towed from car parks, our laws make the owners and operators of a car park responsible for making sure there is adequate signage outlining the parking requirements.

Our laws will also strengthen the scrutiny on the issuing of tow truck licences by enabling the Department of Transport and Main Roads to consider complaints made against tow truck companies and individuals. The Department will be required to set up processes for motorists to make complaints about dodgy tow truck operators.

To learn more about Our Plan visit
betterqueensland.org.au

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Frequently Asked Questions

What has the Government done to stamp out this behaviour?
True to form, the Palaszczuk Labor Government has done nothing to address the thuggish behaviour in the tow truck industry other than ordering a three-month investigation. Motorists won't be protected by a "review, not-do" government.

What if my car is towed from a crash?
The law currently regulates towing vehicles from road crashes. Tow truck operators must be specifically approved to undertake this work and fees and charges are capped.

Will this stop the practice of 'spotting'?
Yes, the penalties associated with breaking our laws will be an economic disadvantage for the use of spotters to trap motorists.

What will the fees be capped at?
The Minister will be able to set the cap for fees and charges. The capped fees will apply to towing and storage. The intent of the laws is to ensure fees are reasonable, similar to the cap applied to vehicles being towed from a crash. These fees will cover the reasonable costs of towing, but should prevent the economic incentive to pay spotters and use other cars to bait motorists.

Will there be exemptions?
If the tow truck licence-holder gets written permission from the vehicle owner, they will be able to charge fees outside the cap and tow the vehicle to any destination. This is to ensure car club members and people who have a genuine need for towing from private property are still able to reach agreement with tow truck operators.

Is this going soft on people illegally parking?
No. People who park on private property without permission can still be towed, but these changes regulate the fees that can be charged and the act of towing.

Will criminal gang members be immediately prevented from working as tow truck operators?
Unfortunately not. The LNP will introduce laws to prevent criminal gang members from holding a tow truck licence as a matter of priority if we form government after the next election.

Parliamentary rules prevent the LNP from re-introducing these provisions which the Palaszczuk Labor Government rolled back in their November 2016 repeal of our strong criminal gang laws.

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