



Minister for Police and Minister for Corrective Services

Ref No: 3349-20

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Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Queensland Parliamentary Service
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your correspondence of 21 July 2020, forwarding the petition numbered 3348-20 and counter-petition numbered 3349-20 received by the House, regarding penalty infringement notices issued for non-compliance with public health directions.

At the outset, I can assure you that the Queensland Government is committed to protecting the safety and wellbeing of Queenslanders. The continued low rates of community transmission of COVID-19 in Queensland are proof of the effectiveness of the public health directions issued by the Chief Health Officer and associated compliance activities.

The Queensland Police Service (QPS) has advised that throughout the entirety of the COVID-19 public health pandemic, police have taken an educative approach in promoting community compliance with the public health directions. I am informed that police have acted compassionately and with discretion in their dealings with the public. Compliance and enforcement activities have been carried out where appropriate and necessary to keep the community safe from the spread and impacts of COVID-19. This has included the issuing of penalty infringement notices (PINs) for contraventions of the public health directions.

In relation to requests to revoke PINs that have been issued, I can advise that the QPS is only one of the agencies responsible for issuing COVID-19 related PINs under the *Public Health Act 2005*. I can therefore only respond with regard to the PINs issued by police.

With all policing operations, police are required to exercise discretion and apply operational judgement to each individual situation. Police consider a range of factors prior to determining the operational viability of a particular action, including the issuing of PINs.

Police have also strongly promoted community compliance with public health directions to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19. This has involved widespread public messaging around the importance of physical distancing and the supply of personal protective equipment, such as face masks.

I can advise that the QPS has established an internal review process to ensure the accuracy and legality of each penalty infringement notice issued by police for breaches of public health directions. A senior police officer is required to check the circumstances of each matter, including relevant public interest criteria warranting such action. Advice is then sent to the issuing station or area if the PIN is identified for withdrawal, at which time the person is then notified of the outcome.

I have been assured by the Police Commissioner that Queensland police officers will continue to balance the needs of the community with the response required to manage the risks that COVID-19 presents in Queensland. Further, police will continue to work closely and collaboratively with the community to safeguard the health and wellbeing of all Queenslanders by ensuring compliance with the public health directions.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mark Ryan', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

The Honourable Mark Ryan MP
Minister for Police and
Minister for Corrective Services